THE
NEW REVIEW.

No. 9.—FEBRUARY, 1890.

IS THE GAME WORTH THE CANDLE?

PERHAPS the most remarkable feature of the recess now drawing to a close is to be found in Lord Hartington's important contribution to the discussion of Home Rule. After patiently parading the difficulties which must inevitably attend the next attempt at legislation in that direction, he has turned once and again to the statesman who stands pledged to make it, and invited him with some persistence to indicate the methods by which in his opinion they may be met. Upon the interest of this invitation, only equalled by that of the eloquent silence maintained in reply, I do not propose to dwell. Lord Hartington's series of searching questions, and Mr. Gladstone's steady refusal to answer, have each received the attention to which both were so well entitled. The public have learnt from the one that they are ignorant of Mr. Gladstone's policy; from the other that they are likely to remain so. It is therefore no longer necessary to point the obvious moral of the reticence to which our lack of information is due.

I do not speak of the end and aim of Mr. Gladstone's secret policy; with that we are all, of course, familiar. He seeks to confer upon an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin the management of affairs certified to be exclusively Irish by a British Parliament sitting in London. This ultimate purpose, on the face of it somewhat difficult of attainment, is matter, I freely admit, of common knowledge. Whether, on the other hand, any scheme exists by which it can be compassed is known only to Mr. Gladstone and the select few who enjoy his confidence. Lord Hartington, by con-

stantly harping on the only three possible, though equally repugnant, alternatives—the exclusion of Irish members from Parliament; their presence with a right to vote on British affairs; or their presence without it;—has brought home to the minds of all the triple mystery which still enshrouds the Liberal leader's project. Some, it is true, throw up their hats with delight whenever Mr. Gladstone speaks of "Devolution" with a big D, and are content that his policy should lurk beneath the convenient ambiguity of that term; whilst others, again, fiercely desire to drag it to the light. Yet upon neither party has the patient labour of Lord Hartington been thrown away. The large majority, even of those who wish to further the policy of Home Rule, now candidly confess that they have but a hazy impression of its outline. Upon these it smiles; upon others it looms through the misty iridiscence of Mr. Gladstone's rhetoric.

Leaving, then, upon one side the palpable obscurity with which, presumably for tactical reasons, Mr. Gladstone envelops the proposals he may one day have to lay before Parliament, I shall endeavour to show that a real confusion underlies the vagueness of their present shape and vitiates the very essence of the concession embodied in any conceivable proposals of the kind. I shall briefly point out that a well-known attribute, at once the most dangerous and the most distinctive feature of every possible scheme for granting a national Parliament to Ireland, precludes us from passing off such a policy as merely one among many methods of delegating the power of Parliament to subsidiary assemblies: forbids us, in fact, from muffling the naked bones of Home Rule in the ample folds of "Devolution." Having in this way shortly ascertained the true nature and distinctive character of Home Rule in any form, I shall submit two conditions, upon the fulfilment of which it will, I think, be allowed that the acceptance of such a measure ought to turn.

When we hear the creation of national Parliaments on the one hand, and the reinstatement of the parish as the unit of local government on the other, both acclaimed with unsuspecting enthusiasm as integral parts of the same policy, it is evident that the so-called "principle of Devolution," as extended by Mr. Gladstone, stands in need of the most careful and critical examination. And

all the more so since, in a less comprehensive form, it has publicly been adopted by both the great political parties in the State. The Conservatives have already given local government to England and Scotland; their programme for Ireland embraces a similar measure. Are they, then, illogical in their refusal of a national Parliament to the latter country? Or does Mr. Gladstone, dealing with Devolution in general at Manchester (December 2nd, 1889), describe such a gift incorrectly as the "one grand devolution," and "by far the most obvious" illustration of that process? Is it all a simple question of expediency; a mere device for the better making and administration of laws?

In answer to such questions the Unionist party assert that there is a wide and essential difference of principle between the expedient of instituting local bodies to lighten the administrative labours of Parliament and the policy of creating separate legislative assemblies. They hold that it is one thing to distribute the freight of a train among its many compartments; another to run four trains, at the imminent risk of collision, along one and the same line.

There is, indeed, a real distinction of kind between local councils and national assemblies: a distinction subsisting in the inherent liability of the latter, from which the former are free, to differ upon vital questions from the view entertained by the majority in the Imperial Parliament. This characteristic propensity, though openly ignored in the general and indiscriminate praise of Devolution, is tacitly acknowledged even by the advocates of an Irish Parliament in their eagerness to advertise the safeguards they intend to provide for the supremacy of the Parliament at Westminster. The possibility of conflict between the two bodies has, in fact, constantly been recognised as the *crux* of the whole question, and different solutions of the difficulty have from time to time been offered by those who desire to see it overcome. Throughout the debates of the Irish Parliament on the expediency of an Act of Union, Foster and the other eloquent opponents of that measure pointed confidently to the power of the Crown. Many people would now detect an obsolete ring in his assertion that, war having been declared by the King, both England and Ireland became at war with the King's enemy, the power of the Parliament of either

being limited to a refusal of supplies. Some, however, among the more ardent advocates of Home Rule are still in favour of a return to this remedy, and, less liberally endowed with Mr. Gladstone's golden gift of silence, openly defend its adoption. Lord Bute, the impassioned supporter of Home Rule for Scotland, in the *Scottish Review*, October, 1889, boldly confronts the possible disagreement of the two Parliaments and finds "the answer in this case to be the Power of the Crown." It is interesting to hear him warn the Scottish people to be prepared for a "very much freer exercise of the Royal prerogative." Nor do I know that the interest is lessened by the declaration of another prophet of this creed, Mr. Sexton, M.P., that the "Royal Veto is as dead as Julius Cæsar."

With the ultimate selection, whether of the Crown or, to return to the present day, of some body wielding the power of the Crown, and its subsequent investiture with authority to settle the differences of the Imperial and national Parliaments, I am, however, in no way concerned. It is sufficient for the purposes of this argument to note the fact that such expedients are discussed by the advocates of Home Rule, and to draw the obvious conclusion that the parties engaged in the discussion contemplate differences between the assemblies they wish to see of a kind which could never arise from the institution of local councils. The characteristic, then, of the policy of Home Rule, which differentiates it from a policy of local government so widely as to forbid the general application of the term devolution to the two, is that the one demands, and the other does not, the institution of some arbiter to hold the balance between the Parliament at Westminster and the national assemblies in Edinburgh or Dublin. Now it is of the nature and essence of arbitration that the parties who submit to it surrender a large portion of the power they possessed prior to their submission. The Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland is now possessed of a full and immediate power, subject to no revision or appeal, throughout the three kingdoms. When a third body, however ordained, is given authority to arbitrate between the Imperial Parliament and a national assembly this will, clearly, no longer be the case. It is, therefore, evident that Home Rule in any form will entail a radical change in the Constitution of the country, and that it cannot be cor-

rectly described as a mere expedient for promoting the efficiency of Parliament.

Having stripped off the specious disguise of devolution and unveiled the true nature of Home Rule, it remains to consider the two conditions which we are, I think, justified in postulating before advancing along so adventurous a path. In my choice of these two tests I have endeavoured to avoid anything in the nature of an exacting demand. We live in a sanguine age; and the lovers of "heroic treatment" for its own sake multiply daily among us. Still, even those to whom heroism and the refusal to take thought have become interchangeable terms will allow that a certain proportion is desirable between a good to be gained and the means selected for securing it. They will admit that the object, even of a radical reform, should be in some degree commensurate to the risks incurred in its pursuit; that a brave and sensible man may endanger his life to rescue the drowning, but scarcely to save his hat.

If such a test be accepted as fair and reasonable whenever great issues are at stake, we are bound to apply it before passing our final judgment on the policy of Home Rule. Our first duty is to discover some authoritative declaration of the benefits expected from this radical reform. We shall then have to estimate their intrinsic importance. Fortunately, the chief of the Irish party has only recently placed at our disposal the very information we need. Speaking at Nottingham, as the official leader of the Irish movement in favour of Home Rule, he has given to the world an explicit statement of the blessings which should attend its success. The "movement aims," according to Mr. Parnell, "more especially at the industrial regeneration of the country." The construction of harbours, the dredging of rivers, the development of Ireland's mineral resources will, we are assured, occupy the attention of the Irish House of Commons to the exclusion of other matters of a more exciting, but a less material interest. That assembly will not seek to emulate the honourable distinction achieved under Grattan; content if, in a narrower field, it can rival and eclipse the modest exploits of the Board of Works. A change in the Constitution more fundamental and far-reaching than any since the Reform Bill of 1832 will, it is hoped, enable Mr. Parnell to supply the public with a

better article at a reduced price. And the complete justification of Home Rule is, in fine, to be found in the comparative efficiency of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Balfour, as competitive directors of engineering operations. To establish his superior claims in this capacity, the former naturally finds it necessary to criticise the attempts of the present Government at the relief of impoverished districts by the construction of state-aided railways. Mr. Parnell, I regret to say, despairs of their success. It is sad to hear that, in his unprejudiced opinion, Mr. Balfour's railways will "scarcely affect very much the price of Irish eggs."

Dispelling, if we may for a moment, the dispiriting effects of this unbiassed prognostic, we have now to set against the increased efficiency which Mr. Parnell, so he tells us, can alone command, the preliminary cost at which his services may be secured. Let us, therefore, assume, for the sake of argument, that under existing institutions there has been a scandalous waste of public money. Let us further believe, if we can, that under the new *régime* no useless expense will be tolerated. Then, in the light of our assumptions, let us decide whether existing institutions shall stand or fall; whether Mr. Parnell's fee "for the better prevention of scandals" is moderate or excessive. I doubt if our decision (after due consideration) will find better expression than in the words addressed by Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Butt in 1871: "'Well now,' we shall say to this gentleman, 'why is Parliament to be broken up?'"

Even if Mr. Parnell has formed a correct estimate of his administrative ability, it must surely be admitted that, since his Irish policy is apparently identical with that of the Government, the margin of difference between the success attending their respective efforts affords but a slender basis for the concession of Home Rule. Will the English people, we are constrained to ask, see this question in the same light, when they learn that not "the aspirations of a nation" but the "price of eggs" is at stake?

It is the fashion to sing the praises of "government on the spot," and to ridicule the folly of legislating in one country for the construction of railways and the draining of rivers in another. Yet is not this kind of criticism, if we come to consider it, somewhat out of date? Railways, the daily post, and the electric telegraph

enable a Minister to obtain the best local and expert opinions on his scheme, fifty times over if he pleases, between the rising and sitting of Parliament. And with schemes for the industrial regeneration of Ireland we are, according to Mr. Parnell, mainly concerned. In any case many subjects of great interest to the Irish, the transfer of land for example, are excluded by all serious politicians from the purview of the proposed Parliament. Any reference to them is, therefore, altogether foreign to an examination of the possible merits or demerits of such a body. The vague declamations, so often heard, against centralisation as a type of government are equally remote from the question of Home Rule. For, if nothing else can with safety be foretold of the proposed Parliament in Dublin, it is at least certain that every Irish interest will be made to centre within its walls. If the centralisation of Irish government be an evil, that evil will undoubtedly be aggravated by the concession of Home Rule, and stereotyped for ever. To my mind, I confess it seems to matter very little where a Bill is passed, provided it has been framed under the advice of duly qualified experts, after a full consideration of the wishes and interests of all parties concerned. In this way Mr. Balfour's Bills have been drafted. Mr. Parnell, if put in his place, must pursue a like course. So that the only advantage which can possibly accrue from the substitution of the one man for the other must be sought for in Mr. Parnell's keener acumen in sifting the evidence of each kind laid before him. Have Mr. Parnell's public statements upon matters of fact in Ireland, we are entitled to ask, been distinguished by the uniform accuracy which might lead us to suppose that he is exceptionally endowed with the gift of discrimination? To find an answer to this query I turn to his last speech, delivered at Liverpool. And I select for examination a detailed statement upon a matter germane to the very issue under discussion. Mr. Parnell there contrasted at some length the state of the harbour at Wicklow, built under the direction of the people in the neighbourhood, with that of the harbour at Arklow, designed and constructed by the Board of Works. The former, he told his audience, had "not been blocked up by sand." Yet I read in the report of the committee of the County Wicklow Grand Jury at the last summer

assizes the following passage: "The Harbour Board have been unable to make any payment to the Commissioners of Public Works since the 11th February, when the sum of £160 was paid. This has been caused by the expense of providing a dredge and appliances for deepening the harbour in the places where it has been silted up." If the case of the Wicklow harbour is not quite so satisfactory as Mr. Parnell would have us to believe, neither is the position of affairs at Arklow quite so dark as he has painted it. When we find the hapless persons described by Mr. Parnell as the "unfortunate Arklow people" actually petitioning for an additional pier as a necessary adjunct to that "splendid piece of work" (I quote their words) "the new extension," it is difficult to see them in the mind's eye as they are pictured in Mr. Parnell's lament, "mournfully contemplating the ruins of the harbour which have been washed across the entrance by the sea." Again, supposing these ruins to exist, it is not easy to believe that they "absolutely preclude either ingress or egress," since, not to mention other vessels, the brig *Wilson* and the schooner *Spray* have recently (the latter only in December last), left the harbour for Hamburg and Cardiff, laden with paving sets and macadam from the quarries in which Mr. Parnell is understood to have an interest.

If Mr. Parnell truly interprets the wishes of his countrymen in the declaration I have examined, the first condition upon which Home Rule can, I submit, alone be granted is not likely to be fulfilled. The industrial regeneration over which he aspires to preside appears in the light of his present utterances to be at best problematical. Supposing, even, that he or his lieutenants succeed as Ministers of the Crown in obtaining more accurate information than they at present offer to the public, there is yet no reason to believe that the schemes they may frame upon it will so far excel those of the Government as to vindicate, by their transcendent perfection, the breaking-up of the Imperial Parliament. If the industrial regeneration of Ireland be indeed the especial object and final justification of Home Rule, no "rational man," to quote Mr. Gladstone's emphatic words (1871), "can suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country for the

purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of mankind." So poor a game clearly can never repay the cost of such a candle.

The odd chance of course remains that Mr. Parnell did not truly interpret the wishes of his countrymen. It may be that the aspirations of a nation are, after all, at stake; that Ireland's unfading dream of independence is the prime mover and efficient cause of the prolonged agitation for Home Rule. In entertaining this doubt I do not at all wish to minimise the weight and importance of Mr. Parnell's Liverpool speech. He is, I have said, the only man entitled to speak with full authority. And I have on that very account first considered the suggested reform of the Constitution solely with reference to his last official pronouncement. Viewing the fact, however, that in this declaration of the especial motive guiding the action of his colleagues, he is at variance with every one of them, and, indeed, with views previously expressed on several occasions by himself; it may be excusable, and I will even say prudent, to investigate the proposed change on the theory that Ireland has not been uniformly misrepresented by those who have pleaded her cause so eloquently in the past. I shall accordingly briefly examine the suggested reform on the not very extravagant hypothesis that a large section of the Irish people really wish for some form of government in consonance with their claims to separate nationality. The opening of this short examination affords a fitting opportunity for putting forward the second test of Home Rule, to which exception cannot, I think, be taken. It will, I trust, be again conceded that a radical reform should not be attempted unless there is some antecedent probability of satisfying the aggrieved who demand it. This test should appeal to the reason of all parties, for it is practically identical with the last of the only "five essential conditions under which," Mr. Gladstone declared in 1886 (*Hansard*, CCCIV., 1536), "the granting of a domestic Legislature to Ireland could be just and wise." In winding up the debate on the first reading of his Bill he laid down that any scheme of the kind "should be in the nature of a settlement and not a mere provocation to the revival of fresh demands." The problem is, then, pre-eminently to satisfy Ireland. This may be attempted in any way with but a single

qualification. It is generally admitted that the scheme selected must be one consistent with the safety of the Empire.

Mr. Gladstone has from the first addressed himself to this problem; and, in grappling with it, has of necessity referred to the time when Ireland did possess a separate Parliament. For, even by attaching an importance altogether exaggerated to the acceptance of his scheme by the Irish representatives of the day, it would not have been possible to do away with the interest and weight of such a precedent. If the experience of the past told definitely against Home Rule, the public would, he knew, be thoroughly sceptical of Mr. Parnell's protested approval. If, on the other hand, he could point to a successful solution of the diffculty in the eighteenth century, a blunt refusal to repeat the experiment would appear unreasonable in the nineteenth. To the eighteenth century Mr. Gladstone accordingly pointed, more than once, in the historical speech with which he introduced his Government of Ireland Bill, and asked, with apparent justice, whether the separation of Parliament destroyed the unity of Empire at a time finely described as "in a pre-eminent sense the century of Empire"? (*Hansard*, CCCIV., 1048). In so far as the necessary qualification was concerned the precedent did not, on the face of it, appear unfavourable. But the fulfilment of the essential condition was not so clearly made out. Mr. Gladstone rather implied than asserted that the Irish Parliament satisfied the aspirations of the Irish, in several passages of this speech devoted to magnifying the relative position and importance of that body in comparison with the British Parliament at Westminster. On other occasions, and notably at Manchester, he has stated this part of the case more explicitly; there describing the Parliament of Ireland as "the organ of her national life which she valued above all." Without now pausing to consider the passages bearing on this aspect of the problem, in some of which Mr. Gladstone appears to have held views differing from those expressed by Mr. Lecky and other eminent authorities, I shall be safe in saying that the impression originally conveyed by this eloquent address, and deepened by subsequent utterances on the same theme, involved the two propositions required by the exigencies of the case; that the Irish Parliament, in the first place, though

elected on a narrow and vicious franchise, satisfied in the main the aspirations of the Irish people; and that, in the second place, it constituted no danger to the Empire. It is here most necessary to note and underline a distinction persistently neglected by every advocate of a return to the dual system. The fact is that each of these propositions is quite true of the Irish Parliament at different times; but that both were never true at the same time. In adducing the Irish Parliament as a precedent, the vital difference between its position before and its position after 1782 is invariably ignored. Yet the whole value of the reference is destroyed by this failure to notice that the Irish Parliament was after that date practically independent; and before it, to quote the words of Mr. Lecky, "wholly dependent on that of England."* For, until it achieved its independence, it never satisfied the aspirations of the Irish, nor afterwards ever ceased to threaten the safety of the Empire.

The independent character of the Constitution granted in 1782 requires no proof from me. It was declared by Foster in 1800 to be one of "theoretic dependence but practical independence." And Mr. Gladstone himself admits this, saying in the speech to which I have referred that "Grattan's Parliament was as independent in point of authority as any Legislature over the wide world." But of the subserviency of preceding assemblies he gives no hint. The distinction between the two positions of the Irish Parliament is in his hands, if I may say so with all deference, not only neglected but even, I am forced to think, obscured by the general application of remarks to that body during the whole period of its existence which can only properly find place in a description of Grattan's Constitution. I am, therefore, bound, before proceeding, to make good this part of my premiss, by indicating briefly a few facts which would seem to qualify materially Mr. Gladstone's statement that during the eighteenth century we had beside us a co-ordinate Legislature, with the same title as that of Great Britain, and with "no juridical distinction between them." (*Hansard*, CCCIV., 1048.) I will not insist upon the restriction well known as "Poynings' Law," since Mr. Gladstone dismisses it on the ground that it was

* *History of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II., 221.

passed by an Irish Parliament. But against the assertion that the "*exclusive* right" of that assembly "to make laws for the Irish people . . . was never denied until the reign of George II." (*Hansard*, CCCIV., 1048), I must set in diametrical opposition the Act known as the Sixth of George I., which declares in explicit terms that the British Parliament "had and of right ought to have full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the people of Ireland." Far from surrendering in the eighteenth century its right, repeatedly exercised,* of passing laws for Ireland, the British Parliament took an early opportunity of confirming it. Since, then, the Irish Parliament never passed laws for England, and the English Parliament not only legislated frequently for Ireland but also had its right to do so more than once affirmed by the highest legal tribunals,† I can see no difficulty in drawing a juridical distinction between the two.

I have, I hope, made it sufficiently clear that up to 1782 the English Parliament could and did interfere whenever it had a mind to do so. It is equally certain that the Irish were by no means content with this arrangement. From the earliest times they answered every exercise of authority from Westminster with a fresh insistence on the fact that, having a Parliament at Dublin, they were bound by that alone. Their complaint was not in the main against the nature of the Acts passed in England, but against the dual system. They constantly, and with justice, demanded either at one

* Note, *e.g.*, 4 Henry V., cap. 6; 12 Henry VI., cap. 4; The Adventurers Act under Charles I., disposing of Irish land; 12 Car. II., and others in the same reign prohibiting the cultivation of tobacco, &c., &c. The above measures may be described as normal exercises of power in distinction to the Act of William III. which annulled all the proceedings of James's Irish Parliament. *Cf. passim*, The Right Hon. J. T. Ball's *Irish Legislative Systems*. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to this admirable work for much of the information upon which the remaining portion of my paper is based.

† In his judgment on a case arising in the reign of Richard III. out of the prosecution of some Waterford merchants under an English Act, "Le chief justice disoit que les statutes faicts en Engleterre liera ceux d'Irland." (Ball's *Legislative Systems*, p. 30.) In the course of "Calvin's case," soon after the accession of James I., Lord Coke laid down that the King's Irish subjects "might by express words be bound by Act of the Parliament of England."

period union with the English Parliament,* or, at another, complete dissociation from its control. At certain times, I admit, the Irish Parliament appeared to acquiesce in a system essentially analogous to that now proposed under the name of Home Rule; but only when, as in the reign of George II., it had on this point wholly ceased to represent the inhabitants of the country. On the other hand, it is interesting, in more ways than one, to note that, whenever the strength of England was reduced to a low ebb, the Parliament of Ireland gave fearless expression to the permanent irritation of the people.

So long as the English Parliament retained its supremacy over that of Ireland it is evident that the latter did not comply with the second test I have ventured to put forward. The independent Parliament of Grattan stands the test, but succeeded no better in fulfilling the one necessary qualification. Of this I am obliged to furnish no proof—though proof and to spare is readily forthcoming from the rejection of Mr. Pitt's commercial propositions and the differences of the two Parliaments over George IV.'s right to the regency—for I find Mr. Parnell at Nottingham admitting that Grattan's Parliament and Constitution gave to his countrymen "a most dangerous power, and a power which was abused in those days." When we hear Mr. Parnell practically confirming the view expressed by the Duke of Rutland in 1784, even before the rejection of the commercial propositions, that "without a Union Ireland would not be connected with Great Britain in twenty years," we may rest assured that Ireland's independent Parliament did threaten the safety of the Empire.

As a result of this, I fear, tedious argument, we are entitled to affirm that the separate Parliament which Ireland once possessed never at the same time complied with the two conditions upon the simultaneous fulfilment of which its reinstatement could alone be

* In 1703 the Irish House of Commons concluded an address to the Queen with these words: "We cannot despair of your Majesty's goodness being extended towards us by restoring to us a full enjoyment of our Constitution, or by promoting a more firm and strict Union with your Majesty's subjects in England." The Chancellor, Sir Richard Cox, warmly but unavailingly supported the prayer for Union. An address in 1707 urged the same request.—Lecky, Vol. II., 416.

tolerated. The past, in fact, affords not one precedent, but two warnings. Two distinct experiments, then, have been tried. Both have failed. Why, then, should either be repeated? Why, above all, should we select for repetition the one which failed by far the more signally of the two? The independent Legislature of Ireland, to which no one suggests a return, never did lead to actual disaster; although possible disaster was plainly involved in its continued existence. The alternative system, on the other hand, to which a close analogy may be found in Mr. Gladstone's proposal, failed, not once but over and over again, to satisfy the Irish, and finally broke down for good and all when, as Grattan pointedly put it, "the balance of England's fate was in the hands of Ireland." I say a close analogy advisedly, for from the accession of George II. the laws regulating the internal affairs of Ireland had almost altogether been made by its own Parliament. (*Ball's Legislative Systems*, p. 135.) The British Parliament, to use the cant of our day, had abstained from interfering in "affairs exclusively Irish," content to restrict its control to matters affecting British interests. All that we know for certain of Mr. Gladstone's secret policy is that it constitutes a return to this very system. Yet it is one which, after a fair trial of at least fifty-five years, was repudiated and flouted by every Irish statesman and every Irish patriot. Grattan declared that Ireland, unless with an independent Parliament, "was a colony without the benefit of a charter," and the Irish members "a provincial synod without the privilege of a Parliament." Sheridan, fearing a compromise of the nature which Mr. Gladstone now seeks to secure, asks with indignation (January 23rd, 1799), "Are we to be told that Parliament will be left to judge of the local affairs of Ireland? Really, Sir, this seems almost too much for men's feelings — a Parliament! A sort of national vestry for the parish of Ireland sitting in a kind of mock legislative capacity, after being ignobly degraded from the rank of representatives of an independent people." Even in the face of Mr. Gladstone's proposal, with every inducement to hold his tongue, we find an Irish Nationalist of the present day, Mr. Healy (*Hansard*, CCCIV., 1214), regretting that the scheme he unfolded did "not get rid of the supremacy of Parliament." But Irish statesmen were not alone in seeing

the folly of any middle course. Pitt described the system under which the two countries were held together before 1782 as "unworthy the liberality of England, and injurious to the interests of Ireland." Canning, arguing against any compromise, in 1799, declared himself willing to give up the plea for Union altogether, "if it did not appear plain that there could be no mode of arrangement devised for the possible differences and disagreements between the two Kingdoms short of Union."

The choice of our statesmen is in reality limited to the Union as it stands or the co-existence of two independent Parliaments. For only by one or other of these two devices can Ireland be granted the political equality to which she is entitled—the "equality without which," Grattan has truly said, "her people would be an enemy to our power and to the Constitution from whose blessings they were excluded." But of these two possible alternatives the latter is barred by consent. The former, therefore, remains as the sole ultimate solution of the Irish question. The middle term, which the Duke of Portland seemingly sought in 1782, and which Mr. Gladstone seeks now, does not exist as a final resting-place for the relation of Ireland to England; for any such compromise must inevitably place the Parliament of Ireland upon an inferior footing, and no position of stable equilibrium can be attained except in the absolute political equality of the two nations.

We can, of course, if we are foolish, allow the Constitution to oscillate in the future, as it has in the past, through Home Rule to Independence, and back again to Union. If we are wise we shall stay it at the turn, whilst yet we may, with a finger.

GEORGE WYNDHAM.

THE DETERIORATION IN ENGLISH SOCIETY.

WHEN the intellectual and social history of the present day in England comes to be written—a period which has risen to so high a level in science and culture—it will be found to have sunk visibly below the water-mark of any preceding age in one respect. We are, unquestionably, a more vulgar people than we were. Our aims, our conduct, in the great scheme of intercourse with each other have deteriorated—I grieve to write it—as they have not done in any Continental people.

Nor is this vulgarity one that appertains to the surface of things. In becoming more cosmopolitan, our travelling manners have improved. We can no longer be charged, as we used to be, with an insular contempt of demeanour for all other nations on earth. The dressing alike of women and of food has been subjected to a beneficent change in this country. It is rarely that our eyes or our palates are offended in society as they were a few years since. But, while on these points there is a distinct advance in our social science, the retrogression from a high standard in matters of yet more importance is evident; and in this retrogression we stand, I fear, alone among the nations of Europe. It is true that my remarks apply only to what used to be called "the upper ten thousand," and would now be more fitly styled "the upper million." In some respects, the middle class cannot be affected by the lower tone of society; in others, where the tendency is morally degrading, it may distinctly be so.

Let not the fact of our rapidly increased population be charged with this lowered tone: the causes are to be sought elsewhere. No one is excluded, if he be only rich enough to entertain, or notorious

enough to form a spot—sometimes a very black one—of attraction in the crowd. To remember the ignoble efforts made by persons of good position to add another name to their overgrown list of acquaintances, whenever a new Mæcenas rises on the social horizon, is to measure the depths of degradation to which London has fallen of late. It is not so in Berlin, Vienna, Rome. Even Paris, where so many causes have conspired to destroy a homogeneous society that it would not be surprising if those on pleasure bent flocked eagerly through whatsoever portals were opened to them—even Republican Paris is more exclusive than we are. The case of the lady living there for ten years under much the same conditions as the man in the parable, whose hospitable intentions could only be carried into effect by compulsion, yet who, on arrival here, was at once accepted by half London society, is an illustration in point so well known that there can be no indiscretion in referring to it. The qualities of the individual may be of the highest, or he may not be unspotted from suspicion in his own country ; but be he a saint, an idiot, or a criminal, it has nothing to do with the matter. The only question of importance is whether he means to entertain sumptuously, lavishly; and, ultimately, if there should be daughters, whether their portions are on a corresponding scale. It is sometimes a new application of the *ignoto pro magnifico*—he is a stranger, and he takes *us* in. But, admitting him to be a worthy fellow, with countless ingots, is that sufficient reason for welcoming him with effusion? Have not Mayfair and Belgravia enough dinners to eat, and crowds to caper at, without displaying this alacrity to swallow strangers wholesale by reason of their riches? We resemble nothing so much as the carp one sees at Fontainebleau, or Homburg, tumbling over each other, open-mouthed, however much they may be gorged, in their scramble for the loaves that are flung to them. In the case of the very young this omnivorousness may be pardoned. One more dance, where he and she may meet, the solitary chance of hearing Coquelin or Albani at a guinea a minute, in a drawing-room, is a great temptation. But what shall we say of the elders—the venerable flock, who, during the past fifty seasons, have seen everything, heard everything, eaten everything ; who, one would imagine, must be suffering from social, as well as physical, indigestion, but who

yet bare their shoulders gladly, as martyrs of old bared their throats, to the capital punishment of another crush? It is a species of madness; and, unfortunately, muzzling in this case is prohibited.

Let a man be admitted into society, for almost any other reason than that of his wealth, and he may add a quota of interest to the hour we pass together. But his wealth—the increment not even won, probably, by individual effort—what does it profit me? Am I the wiser or the merrier for sitting beside a rich man or his wife? Of course, either or both may be charming: it would be absurd to say that a millionaire must be devoid of social graces. All I contend for is that the amount of his income should not be his only passport. It is the destruction of society in England that the man who can contribute nothing of value to the casket is permitted to open it with a golden key.

In great aristocratic societies, like those of Vienna and Rome, the narrow-minded ostracism of Jews in the one case, and of any member of the *mezzo ceto*, however gifted, in the other, is to be deprecated; but there is at least more dignity in this than in a liberality based on such motives as ours. Wealth is the worst reason for claiming admittance into a society which has any pretension to agreeability; and, next to wealth, notoriety. The foreign political adventurer, or the lady whose name has become European property, by reason of the newspapers, would never—unless endowed with other recommendations—have been welcomed in the refined circles of Holland House, of Sam Rogers's breakfasts, of the Misses Berry's nightly receptions, sixty years since. Here is distinct deterioration.

I am far from affirming that there are not as good conversationalists now as in those days. The writer of some recent articles in this REVIEW has asserted it with conviction; and, though I am disposed to doubt whether the quality of wit be not more rare than it was formerly, we can all of us name brilliant or delightful talkers (they are not identical) with whom it is a privilege to pass an hour. But that hour will not be one of a large conviviality. It cannot be denied that the desire to bring together the most agreeable elements of society—*l'art de tenir un salon*—is extinct. The mistress of the house has other aims; or, if the desire exist, the means employed

to attain her end are delusive. Fragments of wild beasts, either lions or jackals, pitchforked together into the cauldron of the commonplace, are not the materials out of which a good social broth is to be made. The culinary skill is lost: the refining process which eliminated what was dull or tasteless, which recognised that the social *gourmet* sought for quality, and not quantity; and that hurry, heat, and heaviness were fatal to social enjoyment.

Now, everyone is in a hurry. I catch a glimpse of my friend in a crowd, and she is going on to four other parties; we are all simmering; and the effort to make oneself heard above a band, and the struggle that is going on at the head of the stairs, produce a sense of despairing idiocy. How is conversation possible under such circumstances?

Prodigality, not infrequently allied to ostentation, follows as the natural sequence of accepting a monied standard in society. We must vie with our neighbours, or die in the attempt. Who dares invite his friends to a simple English dinner, with dry sherry and sound claret? He must have champagne, and a French cook, or abstain from hospitality. And so, of an evening, the board must groan with viands, though two hours have not elapsed since we swallowed our dinners. I remember, twenty years ago, when the most refined circle in London met of evenings in a certain drawing-room, where tea and lemonade were the only refreshments. And this would still be the rule abroad. How many dare to act upon it in London now?

That entertainments are too often estimated by what they cost, rather than by their spirit and social pleasantness, may be illustrated by the remark of a lady, who said to me, speaking of a ball which had apparently united all the elements of brilliancy: "But the presents in the cotillon! I never saw anything so shabby. They weren't worth sixpence each!" Which of us thought of the monied value of the bit of ribbon we received from the hands of beauty in the days of our youth? And while on the subject of festive gatherings, let me say a word about flowers. In themselves the most picturesque and fancy-stirring of all decorations, they may easily become an instrument of positive vulgarity, when their costliness smites us like a rebuff, or their incongruous application is an

insult to our taste and understanding. For this the florist is, no doubt, often answerable; as when we once saw a banister covered with priceless orchids. The primary function of a banister is to be leant upon. Fancy leaning on an orchid! But under no circumstances can the hundreds of pounds spent upon flowers in one night be justified. The most beautiful table decoration I ever saw was one that could only have cost a few shillings. It never would have entered the head of a *nouveau riche* to place anything so inexpensive before his guests.

The tax levied by conventionality, and most grudgingly paid, in the shape of a wedding present to the merest acquaintance is another flagrant instance in the decay of refinement, for which we have only one word. Formerly, such a gift was the spontaneous earnest of cordial goodwill. It was a privilege to have the opportunity of offering our friend something which we hoped he would value for our sake, and keep all the days of his life. Among the masses of costly objects, often numbering many hundreds, now displayed before a marriage, how many are there that will recall even the donor's name a few years hence? It ministers to the bride's vanity that these records should be numerous and splendid; but, outside the narrow circle of her real friends, how many of these records are there, neatly labelled, "From Mrs. ——," "From Lady ——," in which the heart has any part? If the bride be a young lady of quality, it may safely be predicted that the most gorgeous gifts will be from "outsiders"—persons who are struggling by such means into a precarious intimacy, begotten, possibly, of the fact that the bride's mother has floated the outsider into society by sending out cards for her ball.

All this is bad enough in ordinary life, for it is the prostitution of what should be an act of love into one of barter and calculation. But it is yet worse where the marriage is among the most illustrious in the land. The snobbishness that takes advantage of a gracious courtesy to assume a friendship justifying such a liberty as to present a gift has its reward in blatant publicity; and thus another pebble is added to the cairn which marks where the refinement that once distinguished English society lies buried. Again I must remark that I am speaking of what is called "good" society

—the society that gives the tone to those below it. The snobbishness that we have often been reproached with, and which Thackeray ridiculed so admirably, was supposed to be the attribute of the upper-middle class, or those struggling on the confines of gentility. The change that has taken place is that so many whose position should preclude the possibility of it now justly lie open to the charge. The great lady who, at the beginning of this century, asked, "What is vulgarity? I never met with a vulgar person," would not now have far to seek, nor need she go out of her own class to discover the offence which had never come between the wind and her nobility.

I have alluded to publicity. There is a word to be said on this subject. It is to be deplored that no one now is safe from the interviewer. But the taste for personal detail about anyone whose name has ever been before the world has not been gratified by the respectable portion of our Press to the excess in which certain American papers indulge. Our cousins, with all their fine qualities, cannot be credited with that reticence which, in writing of ladies, we hold to be inseparable from good taste. The chronicle of small beer, which records how Mrs. A. was dressed in blue, while Miss B. appeared in yellow at a party, can hardly interest any human being beyond the one whose vanity is thus ministered to; but it is harmless rubbish, very different from the offensive catalogue of personal charms, disposition, fortune, and surroundings which is attached to the name of any prominent young lady in journals published at New York. May the day be far distant when such gross outrages on the sanctity of private life would be tolerated with us. Yet I cannot but regard the increased encouragement of publicity as an evil sign in our present social system.

With all its worship of wealth, its pretension, its pushing, its petty ignoble ways, society exhibits, however, one hopeful sign. The world is not so slavishly fettered by public opinion on certain subjects as it was; or it may be that public opinion has itself undergone a change. Ladies are not afraid to be seen in omnibuses, in second, or even third, class carriages on the railway; nay, they will openly avow that they go to the least expensive seats at the theatre. The pit of the French plays was chiefly occupied, last

season, by people of "Society," the exorbitant prices asked for stalls tending, no doubt, greatly to this result. On the night of the Shah's visit in state to Covent Garden, a lady, well known in the world, told me she had been with her boy to the amphitheatre, where she had seen and heard very well. Such independence of action would hardly have been possible a few years ago. Many a pleasant journey, many an evening's amusement, have been sacrificed to the inexorable law which forbade a gentlewoman from leaving a certain beaten track. Sense has come to the aid of society in this matter. Persons of limited means, and especially the ever-increasing number of those who work among the poor, profit wisely by the cheapest modes of conveyance, and must have their amusements at the least cost, or relinquish them altogether. A lady is no less a lady because, instead of eating her heart out in poverty and idleness, she joins the great army of bread-winners and opens a shop: there is more dignity in her position than if she sent round the hat to her friends. Except by snobs, men and women are beginning to be measured not by their business or calling, nor by where they may be seen, but by what they are. This reminds me, by the way, of my meeting a lady of quality once at a dinner. It was out of the season, and the dinner was not at a fashionable house. The lady of quality thought fit to take me aside and apologise for being seen where she was: "Not at all my set, you know." Her set, obviously, should have been at the lower table in the servants' hall.

I found a friend of mine, a composer, one day at the piano. On my asking him what he was playing, he replied, "It is a little study in simplicity." I laughed: to *study* simplicity seemed to me a droll idea. But I have often thought of it since. Society has, in one direction, begun to "study simplicity"; in others it has become more artificial, complicated, and mercenary. The desire to appear something that we are not, the effort to emulate those richer than ourselves, lie at the root of much evil. The humble virtue of contentment has fallen out of repute, now that all classes are trying to rise, and are instructed that it is their duty to do so. If by "rising" were meant that just ambition to distinguish ourselves by conscientious, faithful work during the short span of our life on earth, or

even those aspirations for knowledge in the working man which lighten labour and lift him from a round of sordid care into the treasure-houses of science, or the fairy-palaces of poetry, none could doubt that the precept and the impulse alike were calculated to add to human happiness. But the restless dissatisfaction with "that state of life into which it has pleased God to call us" permeates all classes, and does not tend to this result. It produces an iconoclastic socialism in the less wise among the lower orders, which those who are now its apostles would be the last to preach if they became winners in the great race for wealth. It causes the parvenu to endeavour to ignore his origin, and to invent a pedigree. It brings ruin to countless thousands, well-born and well-bred, who live beyond their means, and who, in the vain effort to keep their poor little barks afloat, are swamped in the waves of debt and dishonour.

Verily, society would do well to "study simplicity" more than it does. Pretension and self-assertion are destructive of true dignity, and the most degrading of all religions is the worship of the Golden Calf.

HAMILTON AÏDÉ

A PLEASANT PRELATE.

IT is doubtful whether musical tones were ever associated with words of man's composition so as to produce an effect more profoundly solemn and thrilling than that of the *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*, as chanted in the Catholic Church on Passion Sunday and at the vesper services of Holy Week. Gradually, through the slow infiltration of thirteen hundred years of trouble, the simple stanzas have become surcharged with the emotion of Christianity at its fullest and the mystery of Christianity at its deepest. They reiterate the promise of a triumph indefinitely delayed ; there is a conquered sob in every line, and the distant tread of the whole army of martyrs is in the slow movement and regular cadence of the Ambrosian verse.

But whoever may care to analyse the tremendous impression produced by the singing of this venerable hymn at its appropriate season will find, I think, that the grave majesty of the traditional music goes for far more than half. The Latin words themselves, if we except the opening lines, are comparatively tame, the ideas conventional, the reflections trite ; and as a matter of fact the undisputed author of the *Vexilla* was one of the most facile, self-indulgent, gay-tempered, and light-minded of men. Chance and his own winning personal qualities drew him to the forefront of human affairs, and kept him there, during a historic period unparalleled for tragedy. His bright Italian eyes, overworked at one time by study, but miraculously restored to perfect usefulness through the intervention of that most sympathetic of saints, Martin of Tours, had a near view both of ancient Rome at the nadir of her degradation and of the lusty beginnings of barbarian empire. He fulfilled his three-score years and ten in universal honour and great

personal comfort, almost precisely at the close of the terrible sixth century; and his story seems worth retelling, if only for the singular manner in which the sinuous thread of it connects places the most remote and personages and interests apparently the most incongruous.

The imposing array of names attributed to Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus—he himself on one occasion adds Theodosius—might incline one, at first sight, to conclude that he was of ancient Roman stock; but such was apparently not the case. There is no reason to suppose that any of these high-sounding appellations was a gentile name; and, indeed, these were days when only a few families of extremely illustrious pedigree had preserved their gentile names at all. Fortunatus, as the poet is commonly called, was also the name of a martyred saint of the church of Aquileia, whom he regarded with especial devotion, and as Fortunatus we will know him. He was born in 530, in a small hamlet, possibly a family seat, upon the banks of the Piave near Treviso, twenty miles north of Venice, on the road to the beautiful country of Titian and Cima and Giorgione. The great Theodoric was lately dead, and when the boy was five years old, Belisarius came from Constantinople to reconquer for his master Justinian the Gothicised kingdom of Italy. During the ensuing ten years Rome sustained three sieges, and the veins of the expiring city were opened by the cutting of her aqueducts. In the winter of 546-7 came that awful *quaresima*, the forty days of suspended animation, when the apocalyptic vision was literally fulfilled, and the Eternal City left without a single inhabitant. A year later, when Belisarius had reoccupied the place, corn enough was grown inside the hastily repaired walls to support his entire army as well as the ghost-like remnant of Romans who had returned in its wake. Fortunatus would then be seventeen years old, and this was probably about the time that he was sent to study grammar and rhetoric at Ravenna.

The Gothic capital upon the Adriatic had come off easily in the general devastation of the last decade. It also had suffered siege, and surrendered to the great General; but the famous ecclesiastical and civil monuments of Ravenna were unharmed, as indeed, for our awe and admiration, many of them remain to this day. The tomb of

Theodoric was glorious with its original ornaments, curtains of rich Eastern stuff still screened the *loggie* of his palace from the burning sunshine, as we see them in the mosaics of San Apollinare Nuovo, and the schools which the great Amal prince had so generously patronised continued their sessions and flourished fairly, as it would seem, amid the "wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." Fortunatus, at all events, acquired in them a facility in the spinning of elegiacs upon any given theme, fit to excite the despairing envy of an English schoolboy; and if he sometimes made faults in grammar and quantity, on which no Etonian with a gradus at his elbow would venture, it was less because he did not know, or wilfully transgressed the laws of prosody, than because those laws themselves were fatally relaxed. The learned poetry of quantity was yielding on all hands to the natural poetry of accent, and the crystalline Latin of the Augustan age beginning to crumble into formless barbarism. It is most of all because Fortunatus made infinite verse in both styles, and equally well, or ill, that his name constitutes a landmark in the history of letters.

He had the rare grace of understanding, if indeed he did not exaggerate, his own defects; and he cherished a very modest estimate of those powers and accomplishments which were considered so marvellous by the plodding monks and crowned pugilists of his day and generation. "I am the humblest of Italian writers," he protests, in the introduction to his life of St. Martin of Tours, "full of faults, dull of wit, light-minded, and mentally lazy. I have but moistened my lips in the river of rhetoric, and can scarcely keep my faculties from growing rusty. Day by day I am losing what I learned in times gone by, and of all those fine things I seem to have retained the fragrance only." It was no trifle, however, to have diffused even a perfume of half-forgotten learning throughout the sanguinary courts of those grandsons of Clovis among whom his later life was to be passed. Fortunatus continued to reside in Ravenna after his student days were over, and it is probable that he took orders there, since Gregory of Tours describes him as an Italian priest. But the absence of any thought, on his own part, at this time, of a high religious vocation is as plain as is the proof of a certain happy and spontaneous personal piety. A grateful pilgrim-

age to the shrine of St. Martin of Tours was, indeed, the pretext for the highly adventurous journey undertaken by Fortunatus somewhere about his thirty-fifth year; but he went armed with introductions to all the great personages, both lay and clerical, in the new Frankish kingdom, and he enjoyed with impartial zest the hospitalities of Lord High Chamberlain Lupus and Majordomo Gogon, at Rheims, and those of Nicetius, Bishop of Trèves, in his luxurious villa on the Moselle.

As a specimen of Fortunatus's full-fed *vers de société*, I will paraphrase the second of the poems addressed to Gogon, the chief household officer of King Sigebert:—

"Gogon, who givest me food and wine, clothes, wisdom, wit, and nectar,
Thou in thyself art all of these, my generous protector!
Thine is the tongue of Cicero, the music of Apicius,
Now with good talk thou crammest me, and now with meats delicious.
I cry thee grace of thy good cheer, consider my repletion;
When hostile dainties war within, how grievous the condition!
Shall ox and poultry, beef and goose, lie down in peace together,
And is it not a strife unfair, that of the hoof and feather?
While yet I speak mine eyelids close; thou seest I'm past arousing,
The very torpor of my verse betrays that I am drowsing."

This is "fleshly" enough, surely, to suit the most fanatical disciple of the modern school. Fortunatus was more circumspect with the Bishop, whom he addresses warmly—in temporary confusion, as it would seem, with him of Rome—as "glory and apex of the Faith, pontifical head and darling of the entire world, most excellent pastor of the apostolic flock." His description of the episcopal residence is, however, so interesting from an historic point of view that I shall presently translate the opening of it, and every one of his allusions to Trèves is precious.

That renowned city, once the capital of the Western Empire, and even now second only to Ravenna itself in the impressiveness of its Roman remains, had fallen sadly, no doubt, by the middle of the sixth century, from that magnificence in which the Burgundian poet Ausonius beheld it, two hundred years before. At that time, 367, the stupendous basilica of Constantine—now a Protestant conventicle—the forum and the Imperial palace, the amphitheatre,

the circus, and the spacious hillside gardens, were in their pristine glory; only the massive bridge over the Moselle, and the mysterious *Porta Nigra*, with its cyclopean structure, shadowy archways, and frowning towers, were already ancient—the Black Gate, perhaps, almost immemorially so. But what chiefly impressed Fortunatus appears to have been the height of the city wall. "I met my Royal masters," he says, in an eulogy of Sigebert and his queen, Brynhild, "near their mighty town of Metz. I was on horseback, but they commanded me to dismount and embark with them, and we proceeded by the Moselle. . . . So we came to where the lofty walls of Trèves broke on our view—a city noble in itself, and the chosen home of nobles; and we glided along among those ancient senatorial towers, whose very ruins attest their former majesty."

It was perhaps on this same occasion, when he was travelling in the Royal train, that Fortunatus was entertained at the very grand fortified mansion* which he has depicted with pardonable enthusiasm :—

THE CASTLE OF NICETIUS.

"A mighty mountain with a beetling ledge
Rears its rude bulk above the river's edge,
Ringed with a shaggy forest-belt, wherethrough
The untrodden summit pierces to the blue.
On either hand the lesser hills upbear
Green fields that fall away in valleys fair,
Till one long spur perceives alike the swell
Of stripling Rodanus and full Moselle,
And takes the finny tribute of the twain.
So, while the wayward river bears amain
The fruitage of the fields whereby it ran,
To furnish forth thy festal boards, Milan!
Here man may seat him to a banquet, reft
Straight from the wave, and revel in the theft.
Yet none the less the tiller of the soil
Invokes a happy guerdon for his toil,
Feasting his eye upon the early bloom,
And reaping in his heart ere autumn come.

* Brower thinks that the site of this castle of Nicetius is commemorated in the name of *Bischoffstein*. If so, it was nearer Coblentz than Trèves; that is to say, nearer the *confluentia* of the Moselle with the Rhine.

Here, then, where smiling lawns in fresh array
Invite the wanderer's weary foot to stay,
Nicetius, the apostle of goodwill,
Hath built a fold to screen his flock from ill,
Felling the ancient groves, and circling all
The fabric with a thrice-ten-towered wall.
A fortress from the summit opens wide
Arms of defence that, falling, meet the tide;
And massy turrets gleam aloft, as though
These were another mountain; but below,
In the green precinct so embraced and shielded
Hard by the fort, the house of peace is builded,
With marble colonnades, wherein to dream
Of passing boats upon the summer stream,
Running threefold round acres of delight,
To him who views them from the castled height."

He had arrived in Germany in time to compose an epithalamium for King Sigebert and the Spanish princess, Brynhild. He then proceeded to Tours to pay his vows at the tomb of St. Martin, and subsequently to Poitiers, to visit that of St. Hilary. Here he witnessed the triumphal entry of the younger Spanish bride, the ill-starred Gelesuintha, when she came to wed Chilperic, brother of Sigebert. "I, too, saw her," he says, in his lament for the unfortunate queen, "myself a new comer, I saw her as she passed along, *sitting softly cushioned in her rotating silver tower.*" Barely three years later, Gelesuintha was smothered in her bed by Chilperic, at the instigation of the ferocious mistress whom he had temporarily dispossessed in order to espouse her.

The tragic fate of this princess seems to have moved our gentle poet more deeply than anything else in the whole course of his life. His threnody is long and impassioned—by far the best poetry, in parts, that he ever wrote. The notorious repugnance of the devoted bride to her barbaric suitor and the mortal anguish of her parting from mother and sister are portrayed with strong sympathy. But when he comes to the swift catastrophe, this is all, for obvious reasons, that the poet can permit himself to say:—

"Serenely filling thus her alien throne,
Mother and minister to all the poor,

Meekly the stranger's faith she made her own,*
And her immortal crown in Heaven secure.
Ah! signal woe, and hurrying time of tears,
And tale too sad for telling! How delay
The stealthy fate that dogs our mortal years,
Or snatch from greedy Death his lovesome prey?
Brief was the nuptial season, scarce begun
The morning of a life untimely spanned.
One swift and cruel stroke, and all was done;
Her eyes were veiled, and light forsook the land."

There is no reason to suppose that, when he first came to Poitiers, Fortunatus had any thought of ending his days there. Over and over again, in the course of his letters and other writings, he alludes to the consuming regret of an unwilling absentee from Italy. In a letter to Lupus, Duke of Champagne, whom he had previously congratulated on uniting within himself "the wisdom of Scipio, the ability of Cato, and the felicity of Pompey," and so "rebuilding Rome in the heart of Germany," he says: "It is now nine years, as I reckon, that I have dwelt by the shore of the salt ocean, an exile from Italy, to whom, in all this time, there has come not a line from my kindred to console me for our separation." And again, a short sigh breaks from the depths of his heart, in the midst of a poem otherwise quite frivolous: "Banished from the land of my birth, I wander all abroad, sorrowfuller than the stranger who makes shipwreck in the waters of Apollonia." But behind the retreating footsteps of Fortunatus there had rolled over North Italy the flood of the Lombard irruption, and long before anything like order was restored, or communication with his old home could possibly have been re-established, he had contracted ties and acknowledged obligations in France which fixed him permanently there.

It remains to tell the story of the poet's very curious relations with a woman, or rather, with two women, belonging to the older generation of the Merovingian house—with the sainted Radegonda, born Princess of Thuringia, and once one of the numerous wives of King Clotaire, and her favourite attendant Agnes, whom she raised

* The Royal Family of Spain was Arian.

to the dignity of abbess in the semi-religious house which she founded near Poitiers. Nothing, apparently, was ever more blameless in its way than the naïve and tender attachment which grew up between these three. Radegonda had fallen to the lot of Clotaire among the spoils of that war, almost of extermination, which he had waged against the Thuringians, when she was a beautiful and clever child of seven or eight. Her piety and her wit were alike precocious. She liked to sweep the altar steps with her own small hands after Mass, and her appetite for learning was insatiable. How or why it came to pass that, as a Royal captive in Gaul, instead of being taught merely to spin and ride to hounds, after the fashion of Frankish women, she should have been carefully instructed in all the lore of the ancients, we have now no means of knowing. Her tutors were probably Gallo-Roman priests, as her most congenial associates, all her life long, were found in the suffering remnant of the old Roman families.

When she was marriageable Clotaire espoused her, or rather added her to his harem, not, however, without resistance on her part. He seems even to have taken a certain pride in Radegonda's accomplishments, but she annoyed him greatly by the regularity of her midnight devotions, and he was sometimes heard to complain that he was "married to a nun." This incompatible union had lasted but a few years, however, when the young brother who came with Radegonda from Thuringia was foully put to death by order of Clotaire. The outraged Queen withdrew at once from the Court, announced her intention of taking vows, and appealed to Médard, Bishop of Noyon, to invest her with the religious habit. The prelate, and saint that was to be, decided to brave the wrath of the King by complying with her request; and Clotaire, with a mixture, probably, of remorse and relief, ultimately acquiesced in the step, surrendered Radegonda's dowry to the Church, and appears not seriously to have molested her in her subsequent career. The Queen possessed an estate near Poitiers, on which she proceeded to erect and thoroughly fortify a spacious mansion, after the style, and apparently with much of the luxury in the way of baths, porticoes, and gardens, of an imperial Roman villa. Here she established a community of women, in some respects more like

a *béguinage* than a convent proper, where maids and widows of the ancient houses were only too happy to take shelter, at the price of conventual vows, from the universal brutalities of the time, and where they led a life of much piety and refinement, regularly divided between charity to the poor, devotion, and study.

Certain indications appear in the story of Radegonda, as later and more piteously in that of Gelesuintha, that the women of this time of transition and terror were upon the whole decidedly more civilised and, as we should say, "advanced" in their ideas than the men. Something of the same sort may be observed to-day in the ruder and more remote parts of the United States, and is, perhaps, an inevitable incident in the growth of a young and vigorous society. When her community was fairly organised, the astute Radegonda resigned its headship, and constituted her young handmaid Agnes mother superior, while she herself took her place and her daily duties among the sisters. But she could not divest herself of her prestige as princess and founder; and she remained, to all intents and purposes the lady of the house and mistress of its rather splendid hospitalities, while scrupulously yielding precedence to Agnes in religion.

The Royal refuge at Poitiers had been flourishing for a dozen years or more when Fortunatus arrived in Gaul. Men of learning, whether lay or clerical, had always been received with special distinction there, and the welcome of the accomplished Italian was most flattering. Radegonda was now past forty—that is to say, several years older than the poet—and Agnes about as much younger. It may thus have been natural that he should have fallen quickly into the habit of addressing the former as his mother, and the latter as his sister, and it would seem that he must also have accepted some sort of charge connected with the administration of the domain, and a lodging of considerable elegance inside the fortifications. There is a long poem of his on the celestial virtues and profound acquirements of Radegonda—addressed to his brother poets all over the world, and calling for donations to the convent library—where the mixture of sacred and profane in the opening stanzas is very characteristic of Fortunatus: "Ye who fervently embrace the Æonian Muses, whose ears have caught the

tinkle of the Castalian fount, who have revelled in corn from the granaries of Demosthenes, and drawn deep draughts from the broad Homeric stream; to whom a pair of sumptuous servitors have borne on laden trays, Tully the meat of his eloquence, Maro the wine of his song: ye, too, who have tasted of imperishable food, nourished by the Christ upon the germs of Paradise; who, penetrated by a voice of thunder, have felt your steps restrained, now by the monitions of Paul, and now by the keys of Peter,—I, Fortunatus, make you my most humble salutation, a child of Italy detained among the wilds of Gaul, I came hither to pay my vows to St. Martin, but could not tear myself from Radegonda."

How eager the cloistered ladies must have been to retain the society of this cheerful and prolific laureate we can perfectly understand. But let us look a little further among the notebooks of Fortunatus for illustrations of the attentions they paid him, and the harmless amenities by which they diversified the seriousness of their own lives. There are fifty-six poems, long and short, addressed to Radegonda and to Agnes, or to the two ladies jointly. There are poems acknowledging all manner of gifts, and poems to accompany little presents of the singer's own; thanks for flowers and fruit and chestnuts, and eggs and milk, and cooked viands of every description; elegiacs of farewell when the ladies go for a few days into prayerful retreat, and elegiacs of welcome when they emerge. Here is a rather graceful specimen of the latter class, which plainly anticipates the Troubadours, and breathes perhaps no more of earth than of Heaven:—

"And can it be the light is risen anew
Of thy sweet countenance too long denied;
Restored the rapture that with thee withdrew?
Ah then twice glad shall be my Eastertide!
Though scarce the seeds above the furrow shoot,
Thy coming makes a harvest of delight,
I bind my sheaves, I gather in my fruit,
And April gives me all that August might.
The budding vine is here, the tender spray,
The ripened vintage, all in one full hour,
The orchards yield on their first blossoming day
Apple and pear beside the odorous flower.

What sayest thou—that the fields are barren yet?
Nay, never, lady, where thy feet are set!"

Fortunatus has also something to say, in verse, whenever he himself sets out on little journeys or returns, and the birthdays of both his patronesses are commemorated with unmerciful punctuality. He even forgets his tact so far, upon one occasion, as to observe to Agnes that, notwithstanding she is already tolerably mature, he wishes her very many happy returns. The spring must have been late and cold in the year when Fortunatus sent some violets to Radegonda with a few charmingly sentimental lines:—

"These are the days when I was wont to glean
From the fresh turf of my small garden-close,
Or in the fields, the snowy lily-blows,
Which, with the sweet, strong beauty of the rose,
Made, among nobler gifts, another not too mean.

But now the fairest fail me at my need;
Violets, the second best, are all I bring;
Yet, like the rose, these are Love's offering,
And, to the scented grass while close they cling,
Deep in their purple hearts they bear a noble seed.

These violets wear the royal murex dye,
Steeped are their petals in rich odours too:
Beauty and fragrance from one blossom. You
Possessed like gifts to theirs and still renew,
Your sweetness and your charm survive eternally."

From the piece entitled *Flores super Altare*, we gather that church decoration at Easter, under the influence of Agnes and Radegonda, was elaborate enough to suit the requirements even of our lavish modern taste. Of course there were busybodies who made unpleasant remarks about Fortunatus and Agnes, but he repels their insinuations with equal warmth and dignity: "I have never regarded thee otherwise than I would my sister Titiana. It is as if Radegonda had been the mother of us both. I have sometimes feared, dear lady, lest the malicious whisper of the world should create a constraint between us; but if thou wilt still accept my tender homage, I vow to live beside thee as I have done hitherto."

It may be doubted, however, whether the gracious dames of

Poitiers did not cater a little too generously to the *gourmandise* of their friend, on the evening when the dishes appeared to him to "swim in wine," and he found himself so sleepy after the courses that he could scarce compel his fingers to indite the customary tribute. But a thoroughly refined elegance must have characterised many of their feasts, and the table was, no doubt, a pleasing sight on the occasion which is thus described :—

"Lo, happy guest, a banquet beatific,
Odours divine, with flavours to succeed!
How the red roses laugh in heaps prolific!
The table blossoms brighter than the mead.

Lilies amid the purple open whitely,
Whiffs of sweet fragrance with each other vie,
The feast is spread upon a covering sightly
Of woven buds instead of napery.

Better, I say, yon sheet of blushing spices
Than all the vulgar fabrics of the loom,
The wall-hung greenery, too, that well disguises
The plastered whiteness of our supper-room.

So fair is all, that I could deem me lying
Bedded in flowers beneath the open sky,
Too glad to revel in the moment flying,
And leave the heavenly feast till by-and-bye

Thy hands, my sister, all this witchery wrought;
Thou, mother mine, wast worthy of the thought."

It is but just to add that the ladies themselves consistently abstained from the dainties with which they plied their guest, and there is a poem in which Fortunatus beseeches Radegonda to allow herself wine, using, among others, the well-worn argument of Paul to Timothy. It is plain, too, that Radegonda thought him worthy of her gravest confidence, for it could only have been from her own haunting memories of a horror-stricken childhood that Fortunatus gathered the material for the serious and really noble poem on the *Ruin of Thuringia*, which he composed in her name. The sarcophagus of Radegonda, rifled of her remains by the Huguenots in the sixteenth century, is still shown in the abbey-church at Poitiers,

which is dedicated to her memory. She died in 587, and Agnes did not long survive the generous mistress who had been pleased to serve her; but Fortunatus lived on, bereft of their flattering cares, and some ten years later, when himself near seventy, he was raised to the episcopal throne of Poitiers.

He fulfilled the duties of his high office faithfully for a few years, and most of his theological and more strictly religious writings, such as the meditations on the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and many of his lives of the saints, belong, no doubt, to the late and lonely evening of his days. But, however edifying in spirit and correct in doctrine the graver compositions of the Bishop may be, it is not by these that he would ever have merited so many centuries of remembrance. I have spoken of Fortunatus as a unique link between the ancient and modern worlds, in respect of literary and especially of poetic form. But he was even more than this. We may smile at the rapture of the amiable exile over his creature comforts, and the child-like effusiveness of the delight he found in unrestricted intercourse with his lady patronesses, but none the less does that triple attachment, naïve and spotless, mark in the most striking manner the moral revolution which had newly been wrought by Christianity. No such innocent friendship between the sexes would have been possible in the days when men wrote faultless Latin. Witness even the all but unmentionable love-songs of that far better poet, Ausonius, whose footsteps Fortunatus followed, after an interval of two centuries, from Trèves to Bordeaux.

The ineffable freshness of the morning hour evaporated as the sun of the new day rose higher in heaven—giving place, ere long, to the sultry sentiment and impassioned mysticism of the Provençal school. But the plain staves of the matin-song are sweet to remember, even though delivered by a voice of slender compass, and with endless iteration.

HARRIET WATERS PRESTON.

THOUGHTS ON REPUBLICS.

IT is perhaps too much the custom of those of us who earn our bread by surveying mankind from China to Peru, and writing daily or weekly articles on politics, to take things as they come weekly or daily, and indulge in no further reflections on them. Some indeed have said that it is not the custom of the present day to indulge in further reflections upon anything; and there are even those who, going yet more to extremes, add that it is a very fortunate thing, the affairs of the moment, and especially the political affairs, being remarkably ill-suited to bear reflection of any kind, above all the "further" kind. Once it was different, and the political article of the day took the form of *The Character of a Trimmer*, or *The Conduct of the Allies*. Let it be allowed to a political journalist of some years' standing—than whom nobody can be more conscious of the difference between himself and Halifax or Swift—to muse for a while, in the temper of their musing if not with the merit of their expression, on the latest of modern revolutions—the revolution which had the happy thought of making the centenary of 1789 practical. And let this musing take for its subject, first, some expressed opinions on the birth of the Brazilian Republic, then Republics themselves, Brazilian and other.

It was natural, no doubt, that the action of the patriotic Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca and his band of brothers should attract most and earliest comment from sympathisers. Mr. Gladstone has, as an afterthought, told us that his own benediction on the infant Republic was bestowed in respect rather of the unobtrusive and unsanguinary manner of its birth than of its Republican character. Not all commentators showed even this Epimethean cautiousness. One bird of freedom (I forget its actual perch, but it was some-

where between Maine and Florida) clapped its wings at once over the fact that its own species were now crowing from Cape Horn to the St. Lawrence—the bird forgot Honduras, where the shadow of tyranny still broods, but no matter. Echoes of the crowing in England asked how anyone could wonder that a people should prefer managing its own affairs to having its affairs managed for it, even by a sovereign of liberal ideas, benevolent aspirations, culture, scientific acquirements, and so forth. And some dispirited Monarchists seem to have found little to reply except in groans, after the manner of a Greek chorus, that a Republican dog should have been found to bite so good a man as Dom Pedro. Whether the Brazilian Monarchy had, at any rate for some half century of its not much longer existence, been much more than a Monarchy in name; whether the substitution of Senhor Deodoro da Fonseca for Dom Pedro d'Alcantara was much more than a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose;* whether a Republic established by a handful of soldiers and schemers in one or two great towns of a country covering half a continent could be said to have any meaning as an expression of popular will—these were questions about which none of the eulogists of the Brazilians for daring to be free troubled themselves. But what they troubled themselves about least of all was a set of questions lying much further back—the questions: What is a Republic? Is there more freedom under a Republic than under any other form of government? Is it physically possible for a Republic to conduct public affairs on Republican principles—if those principles are summed up or even distantly indicated by the phrase "managing one's own affairs instead of having them managed by somebody else," or, as that eminent politician, Mark Twain, prefers to put it, "every man having a say in the government"?

In considering these interesting questions we shall receive much assistance from one of the copious telegrams in composing which the Provisional Government of Brazil appears to delight. "It is a mistake," says the Provisional Government, "to suppose that it [the Constituent Assembly] will have to decide between the Republic and the Monarchy. The Monarchy is out of the question—the Constituent Assembly will only have to organise the Republic." And again: "Every attempt to disturb the peace shall

be stamped out with unflinching severity." These authoritative declarations of Republican principles, set forth by the youngest and therefore perhaps the most infallible, certainly the least fossil, of Republics, are very welcome and very instructive to the thinker on Republics. He might have thought (if he had been a very inexperienced thinker) that it was the business of a Constituent Assembly to constitute: he now sees that it is only its business to accept something already constituted. And he might have thought (but here he would certainly have shown himself yet more inexperienced) that if there was one thing that a Republic could not consistently do it would be to "stamp out with unflinching severity attempts to disturb the peace"—that is to say, translating official into plain language, attempts to change the government. The cardinal principle of the Republic is, one is told, the management of one's own affairs. One, being a Brazilian, tries to do this: and, lo! there appears on this side a grave pundit, pointing out that it may only be done in one particular way; and on that side a valiant marshal still more significantly ready to stamp out anybody who wants to do it in any other. There is plenty of *imperium* so long as a sufficient number of Fonsecists are ready to follow their Deodoro; but where, oh where, is the *libertas?*

It would, however, be extremely unphilosophical to visit this inconsistency on the heads of the Generals Marmalade and Lemonade, the *rastaquouères retour de l'Europe*, the lawyers in want of a place, and the journalists with great French pseudonyms who have made the Brazilian Revolution. It is theirs by race—they are at least Republican in this little weakness. If it is too much to ask lazy memories of the present year to go back a quarter of a century and compare the almost contemporary methods of Wittgenstein and Sherman, to draw the parallel and strike the balance between the fate of the kingdom of Poland and of the sovereign states of Virginia and Mississippi, let us take more recent and less alarming instances—for example, the incidents of a certain contest between persons of the names of Tilden and Hayes, not so very long ago, or the eminent exploits of M. Constans in a year which has just ceased to exist. *Nec Sthenebœa minus quam Cressa:* there is uncommonly little to choose between the methods in

any case just cited or referred to. Whether the people has to be made to exercise its peaceful rights in the way that is best for it, or whether its unrighteous attempts to "disturb the peace" have to be "stamped out," they are all in a tale, from never mind what autocrat to Fonseca, Barbosa, Constant, and Company. "Ah! but," says our friend of the last years of the nineteenth century, "what a difference! Here you are stamped out by a tyrant: there by the majesty of the people." Now, for my own private part I should have an almost equal objection to be stamped out by anybody. But from the point of view of my friend, I should have an infinitely greater objection to be stamped out by the majesty of the people; and it may not be impertinent—since in most political discussions of the day it seems to be wholly forgotten—to indicate the point of this doubtless most unreasonable view.

Your Monarchy (at least your real Monarchy, for it may be admitted that the constitutional variety, though it keeps the main structure of theory, has rather endangered the argumentative buttresses) is thoroughly logical. For the purpose of governing, you discover or invent a species different from the governed—not necessarily better (that is the error of Citizen Carnegie and his likes)—but different and indisputable. You may be as good a gentleman as the king, but you are not the king, and as you can't become the king you are neither jealous of him nor feel yourself degraded by his existence. *C'est son métier à lui d'être Roi:* it is your business on your part to be loyal. There is no competition: therefore there is no emulation: therefore there is no ill-feeling. The bulls in Egypt who had not the Apis marks might as well have been jealous of the bull that had. And these things being so, the right of the king to cut off heads, to impose laws, to "stamp out," is quite unquestionable. If you want to question it you take your life in your hands, you rebel, and you win or you don't. If you don't, it is part of the game that you should be "stamped out," and no reasonable man who plays quarrels with the game. You go to the gallows, the block, the garrotting chair, as Mr. Thackeray says somewhere, with "manly resignation though with considerable disgust," but you do not feel that anyone has altered the laws of the game while you were playing. In a less tragic and more conventional state of

things there is the same consolation. A law is passed, and you do not like it. You have fought against it to the utmost of your powers; you have voted against it; you have written the most admirable and unanswerable articles against it. But it is passed, and you submit. Why? Not because it has passed the Commons, whom you elect in part, whose majority, if against you, has been elected by persons who were your own equals (to say nothing less); not because it has passed the Lords, whose political position you admit as an excellent thing, but of whom many are no better gentlemen than yourself and to none of whom you pay any more personal respect than to any other gentleman. Hundreds of Bills pass both Houses separately: several every year merely miss the double passing by accident. All are waste paper till they receive the Royal Assent. It is the Royal Assent that you obey. They tell you it cannot be refused: but what does that matter? The important point is that, "cannot" or no "cannot," nothing is valid till it is given. You are not bidden to obey by Johnson or Thompson, but by the king; if you disobey, it is the king who hangs you, not Thompson or Johnson. The game is played throughout: and let me repeat, no rational man minds losing when the game is played.

But the Republic never plays the game. Its whole force, its whole appeal, rests on the consent of the citizens, just as the force and appeal of the Monarchy rest either on the negation of that consent altogether or on the hypothesis that once given it cannot be retracted. And yet, as the Brazilian Government has so kindly pointed out afresh to us, it cannot get itself constituted, it cannot carry on government for a week or two, without casting consent to the winds and levelling rifles at dissenters. It is quite heartrending to think of the sufferings of a logical victim of the recent anti-Republican counter-pronunciamiento at Rio. Keen are the pangs of being stamped out in any case, but keener far to feel that you are being stamped out contrary to the laws of the game. The nation, let us say, consists of a hundred persons. Fifty-one vote for a Republic, forty-nine wish for a Monarchy. Man for man, vote for vote, there is no conceivable difference between the value of the individuals and the value of their desires; yet the purely accidental, irrelevant, and irrational fact of fifty people agreeing with A and

only forty-eight with B gives A the power to tyrannise over B just as much as any Pedro, cruel or cultured, would do. B's liberty goes "into abscondence," as a learned professor would say—it is his *ex hypothesi*, but if he attempts to use it he is stamped out. This is bad enough, but worse remains behind, a still more hideous self-contradiction. Fifty-one persons, as we have said, vote for a Republic, the fiftieth and fifty-first being, let us say João and Beltrão. A week, a day, an hour afterwards João and Beltrão change their highly respectable minds. It may be that the revolution has not recognised their merits sufficiently in the distribution of spoils. Marshal Deodoro may have cut João and been not at home to Beltrão, or a real counter-revolution may have effected itself in their opinions. This is no matter: the two fall off, attempt to assert their new principles, fail, the power being in the other hands, and are stamped out. Now, reflect on the horror of this, which is a much more exquisite horror than the other. Not only are these two poor men stamped out in defiance of the Republican principle that the citizen's political affairs shall be managed by him not for him, but they are now actually part of the majority—the minority having become such by the transference of their voices. Therefore they ought to be hanging others instead of being hanged themselves; therefore a most ghastly act of high treason is being committed; therefore (always on strict Republican principles) Freedom ought to shriek over them as loud as over Kosciusko, and much louder than over Kossuth.

Here the practical man, the practical Republican, finding that he cannot (as indeed it is quite impossible) find any technical flaw in this unpleasant chain of reasoning, will doubtless cry, "This logic-chopping is all very fine, but it is purely academic. You know very well that no government can be carried on unless the will of the majority is deferred to; unless that majority is supposed to remain intact for some more or less considerable time; unless the central authority puts down breaches of the peace." Unfortunate practical man! In less than half a dozen lines he has accumulated all the worst fallacies, the most degrading sophistries (according to Republican argument), of the politics of despotism. The paramount importance of order, the right of the strongest, the necessity of

obeying convention, the superiority of expediency to justice—all the tyrant's pleas, all the sycophant's justifications, here they once more rear their horrid heads and hiss their poisonous venom. (*Style républicain du plus pur!*) Not a word has the practical man said, not a single way or byway of argument has he indicated, which would not justify Jeffreys and bear Bomba harmless through. On the Monarchical side, his arguments are good enough and consistent enough. It is, indeed, the common-sense basis of the Legitimist-Monarchical contention that to obviate civil dissension and disorder by making the possession of supreme power dependent if not upon some essential quality, upon some inseparable but incommunicable accident, is the first object of politics, and that everything must give way to this. The Republican who admits this or anything like it is lost.

And he is more lost still if we meet him on another part the field, a very favourite part with him, the question of personal dignity. To listen to democrats of the Carnegie stamp one would imagine that the true subjects of a Monarchy were always and necessarily tormented with a sense of inferiority to their "betters." We have already seen how far this is from the truth, though it may be admitted that it gives an interesting light on the point of view of those who say it. *They*, it is clear, have this uneasy sense of being in the presence of "betters." And, indeed, it would be odd if they had not. It is impossible to imagine anything more galling to the sense of personal dignity than existence as one of the minority in a Republic. You are *ex hypothesi* as good as the president, of equal political rights with the president, as well entitled to have your say (*vide* Mr. Clemens) on any matter as the president. And yet—as if there never had been any godlike stroke of Brutus, any Rütli, any Lexington, any Jeu de Paume—the president can give places, can sanction legislation, can even, as few haughty monarchs dare to do, veto it. And you can do just nothing at all but shoot him, which exposes you to the most unpleasant consequences. Even if you got out of this by regarding the president as a gilded slave, as your paid man, as a creature handshakable *à merci et à miséricorde*, there remains the abominable inequality of Jones, conferred upon Jones by Equality, and not

tempered by any possible considerations of the sort. If Jones happens to be a member of the majority and you happen to be a member of the minority, you are for years practically the slave of Jones. You may not politically do or say the thing you will, but the thing that Jones wills. You make war with foreign nations at the discretion of Jones; you violently object to a disgraceful peace with them, and Jones quietly makes it; you are an ardent Free-trader, and Jones studies with practical success to make you, in your capacity as citizen, a Protectionist more wicked than the late Sir Richard Vyvyan himself; you are a non-interventionist, and Jones sends the ironclads, for which you pay, to bombard harmless towns; you like an honest glass of beer, and Jones sends you to prison if you drink it. This is "managing your own affairs"; this is liberty; this is equality; this is having a say in the government. And the only possible consolation—that perhaps after the next election you may take your revenge on Jones, may make peace with his enemies and bombard his friends, may sweep away his tariff and give instead a State bounty to every brewer and every distiller—ought not, if you are a real Republican, to give you the slightest comfort. Ejuxria or Utopia ought no more to be governed in opposition to the wishes of a free Ejuxrian or Utopian like Jones than it ought to be governed in opposition to your own. You are as false to your principles in tyrannising as in being tyrannised over. Perhaps it is a hidden sense of this hopeless contradiction, of this inextricable dilemma, that has made Republicans from time to time so fond of the maxim, "Be my brother or I will kill you." Only when all the citizens are your brothers in opinion, or when you have killed all who are not, can you get the Republic theoretically to work. And alas! you know very well that if you did get it so to work there would be a split next day. You must do the thing that Jones wishes, and you do not; or the thing that Jones does not wish, and you do. In either case you are false to your principles; in one case you are a slave (and therefore degraded), in the other a tyrant, and therefore (see all the Republican copy-books) much more degraded than a slave.

It may seem, then, necessary to inquire a little how it is that anybody consents to live under such an odious and illogical form of

government; next to inquire further how it is that anyone can be found to exchange more intelligent varieties for it. As to which points there were much to be said. The candid man will confess on the one hand that even in these restless days people are by no means inordinately given to examining the first principles of their beliefs; on the other that Monarchies themselves have for many years taken to playing with Republican principles so much that a little confusion is inevitable and excusable. But there are some considerations which may be put. In the first place your Republic (*teste* its great expositor before cited) offers every man "a say in the government." He doesn't get it: as I have humbly endeavoured to prove, it is practically impossible that he should get it; but it is offered him—it is the gold piece in the child's pocket. Then the Republic tells him that he is "as good as anybody else." He isn't: it proceeds to show him as much in the very first division where he happens to be in the minority; but it tells him that he is, and he believes it. Furthermore, the Republic appeals, as no Monarchy can possibly appeal, to the gambling instinct in human nature, to the instinct of vanity, and to the instinct of greed. Let me guard promptly against the charge of having duplicated in the matter of gambling and greed. They are not the same instinct by any means. Under the domination of greed a man makes for certain gain and is purely actuated by considerations thereof. Show him that he may even probably lose and he is choked off at once. (The consciousness of this elementary fact in human psychology is responsible for much of the wrath which has been lavished on Mr. Arthur Balfour.) The gambling instinct is quite different. Here the element of attraction is not certainty but uncertainty; the prospect of gain is alluring, no doubt, but it is rather a question whether the risk of loss has not something alluring in it also. The real point is the chance, the uncertainty, the gamble: so much so that men have often been known to venture quite disproportionate stakes in business, in sport, in love, in war, simply for the excitement, for the "flutter." Now, in all these points the Republic has more to offer than the Monarchy. Its general *prime*, the attraction of "no ticket without a prize," which it offers, is addressed to vanity. It is dear to the uninstructed and unintelligent man to be

told that he has no betters, that he is as good as anybody else. The instructed and intelligent man knows that if twenty Constitutions brayed these assertions at him through twenty thousand trumpets they would still be false. A would be handsomer, B taller, C more gifted, and therefore it matters very little to him whether D is more "privileged." The *ultima ratio* of relative value after all depends on a man's own estimate of his own worth, and is not affected by any Constitution. But to the majority, who are either not conscious of possessing any worth at all or painfully doubtful as to the accuracy of their own judgment, it is no doubt comforting to be told that they are as good as anybody else. At any rate it would seem to be so. And so the Republic hits the majority of its birds on this wing.

Others it hits from the point of view of downright greed. This is not a pleasant consideration, but men are what they are. There can be no question either with any historical student or with any student of actual politics that "Republic" usually spells "corruption." It always has been so; it is so; in the nature of things it must always be so. No doubt there have been plentiful waste and plentiful malversation of public money under Monarchies; but the thing has been limited to comparatively few persons, and has always had more or less specious excuses of services rendered or of the giving away of property which was the king's property, not the nation's. It was a Republic which invented the plain, simple, unblushing doctrine of "the spoils to the victors," and long before a Republic had formulated the doctrine almost all Republics had favoured the practice. To make the most out of Jones while you have the upper hand of him; to lay up for yourself as much as possible against the evil day when Jones shall have the upper hand of you—this stands, if not to reason, yet to human nature. The king is always restrained to a certain extent by simple considerations of prudence; it is not worth his while to kill the goose for the sake of the golden eggs. The temporarily dominant party in a Republic is under an exactly opposite temptation. Why keep the goose for the possible, nay certain, benefit of the abominable Jones? To which it has to be added that, pretend the contrary who may, it is impossible to feel a genuine sense of duty towards what is only an exaggeration,

to the *n*-th of oneself. The sole claim which a Republic has to the obedience, the respect, the loyalty, of each man is his own consent to it; and his respect for its property must necessarily, however loudly on his moral days he may proclaim the contrary, be conditioned by that fact. He says—not as a personal brag, not as an exaggeration, but as a plain statement of logical and political first principle—*L'État c'est moi*, and it is not at all surprising that he should go on, "The property of the State is my property," and proceed to effect restitution of the said property to its, in his case, immediate owner.

But most of all does the Republic appeal to the gambling element in man. Under the Monarchy, the *gros lot* is by hypothesis unattainable; even the middle prizes are usually and in practice restricted to a small, or comparatively small, number of persons. And not only the actual distribution of the loaves and fishes, but the whole course of public life generally offers much less of the temptation of the unforeseen than is the case under the Republic. In some examples thereof every other man you meet may be said, without much exaggeration, to be *ancien Ministre:* and if that seem not a very delightful state it has to be remembered that every ex-Minister hopes to be Minister again, and that everyone who looks upon an ex-Minister says to himself "What he was yesterday I may be to-morrow." The famous jest of the old, the real, Revolution, to the unfortunate producer of title-deeds centuries old, that "If you have had it so long, citizen, it is time for some other citizen to take his turn," is hardly a burlesque of actual Republican sentiment, and not a burlesque at all of the unspoken hope which makes men Republicans.

And so the Republic scores by its appeal to perhaps the strongest, and certainly the most widely diffused of human weaknesses—vanity, greed, the love of the uncertain and the unforeseen, while it hardly loses by its congenital unreasonableness and self-contradiction. It always flatters, though it often deceives; it sometimes gives solid rewards, it almost invariably excites, stimulates, interests, allures. The Monarchy, on the other hand, satisfies little but the reason, which is not usually the governing part of that *animal*, which is good enough to call itself *rationale*.

It hurts the snob's self-love, it leaves nine greedy men out of ten unfed and without hope of food; it is regular, punctual, humdrum, not interesting. If at crises and intervals it promises opportunities for the display of virtues and graces as rare and delightful as the vices of the Republic, both ordinary and extraordinary, are disgusting, this only happens now and then. Not every day, nor once in every century, shall the words "I have kept the bird in my bosom" fit Sir Ralph Percy's lips. Whereas the particular felicities of "*Respublica*—the public thing," are to be found at any moment quite facile and ready. She is always ready to tickle vanity, to at least promise satisfaction to greed, to bait the gambling trap with hopes. And so, it would appear, she is rather on the winning hand just now, and hopes to be even more so. Which hopes if they be realised, the joyful future condition not merely of statesmanship, but of taste, manners, learning, arts, and most other things that make life worth living, may be faintly guessed from certain premonitory examples of it in countries which it is unnecessary further to particularise, but which may be found without much seeking.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

A HERMIT OF OUR OWN DAY.

MANY years ago a Christmas number of *All the Year Round* was published under the title of *Tom Tiddler's Ground.* There was an introductory chapter headed "Picking up Soot and Cinders," and this was the prelude to the stories which followed. It gave a very vivid description of a hermit living among the pleasant dales and trout streams of a green English county, in a house which he had allowed to fall into utter ruin and decay. His only clothing was a blanket fastened with a skewer. His bed was a heap of soot and cinders. He was dirty himself and surrounded on all sides by dirt—altogether a very objectionable and repulsive person. Mr. Mopes was the appropriate name bestowed upon him by the writer. Shortly after the appearance of *Tom Tiddler's Ground* it came to my knowledge that this Mr. Mopes was no mere imaginary character, but a living man; that his real name was Lucas, and that he lived at a place in Hertfordshire called Redcoat's Green, between Hitchin and Stevenage, a small station on the Great Northern Railway. I accordingly proceeded one morning to Redcoat's Green, had a good look at the neglected house, and a long chat with the hermit, and gave an account of the interview in a monthly magazine.

The account came as a surprise to most people who had read *Tom Tiddler's Ground.* They looked upon Mr. Mopes as a mere fantastic creation of the writer's pen; a mere literary peg upon which the customary Christmas stories of *All the Year Round* had been hung. Indeed there was nothing to suggest any other idea. It was almost impossible to believe that such a man could live in such a manner, a few miles away from London, in one of the home counties with which so many dwellers in the Metropolis must be

familiar. But there was really no exaggeration in the picture drawn by the writer. The house had evidently been at one time a comfortable residence. Part of it was of red brick, and this was solid and substantial enough. The roof, too, seemed in a fair state of preservation, except in one or two places. But the general appearance of the building, and the grounds adjacent, was suggestive of neglect, decay, and desolation. The front door was boarded up; the windows were barricaded with thick pieces of timber; the outhouses were in a state of dilapidation, one wall having completely fallen; the tiles had slipped away from the roofs, leaving free entrance to rain and wind; the rickyard was overgrown with rank weeds and littered with rubbish; the ricks had rotted away year by year until they had become mere dungheaps in colour and shape. It was a dismal scene upon which it was impossible to look without sadness.

> "On every side the aspect was the same,
> All ruined, desolate, forlorn and savage;
> No hand or foot within the precinct came
> To rectify or ravage."

In one of the outhouses was the kitchen, and there the hermit had taken up his abode. It was a small low room; its walls and ceiling were blackened with smoke; the floor was strewn with dirt and rubbish. All the furniture consisted of a few common chairs and a kitchen table. Upon the latter was a number of empty wine bottles. Other wine bottles littered the floor, some being broken, and there were a few spirit jars. A sort of sloping bank of cinders and soot formed the hermit's bed; he had used no other since he took to this strange mode of life. A small fire was burning in the grate. The room was so intensely gloomy that at first it was difficult to see into it at all, through the apertures between the stout iron bars which defended the opening where the window once had been. In this wretched place the hermit passed his days.

His appearance was in harmony with his surroundings. He was filthily dirty; dirty all over. The smoke and soot had so settled upon him that his face and body were almost black; not the good, honest, natural black of the negro, but the foul, accidental

black of the coal-heaver or the chimney-sweep. For years, apparently, no comb had passed through his hair, no brush had disturbed its clotted masses, and no scissors had curtailed its rank growth. It hung in matted clusters about his face and gave a strange wildness to his features. He was without any clothing whatever except his one comprehensive garment, the blanket, which was not even fastened with a skewer, but was kept around him, with some difficulty, by constant folding. At the time of my visit he had lived in this deplorable state for twelve long years.

And what were his reasons, it will be asked, for thus shutting himself up like a wild beast in its den, and allowing himself to be made a show of for any passer-by who cared to look upon him? It is hard to say. Certainly it was not poverty. He had inherited a fair competence and did not spend the whole of his income. Dr. Daniel Hack Tuke, who once paid him a visit and published an account of it in the *Journal of Mental Science*, was of opinion that he was insane, and simply required proper care and kindly treatment. But there was certainly nothing in his conversation, at all events in the conversation I had with him, to suggest insanity. He spoke fluently, used well chosen words, argued fairly well, and seemed to be a man of average education and good intelligence. In explanation of his reasons for leading so strange a life, he said something about the persecution of relatives; but the explanation was given in a hesitating manner, and without any of the earnestness which of itself might have carried conviction to the mind of a listener. What he said entirely failed to convince me. One thing seemed clear. Evidently the hermit was greatly gratified by the attention he excited. It seemed as though a strong love of notoriety had become really morbid by the stimulant constantly applied to it. He told me, in an exulting tone, that he had had as many as 12,000 visitors in one year, and as many as 240 in a single day. He had counted them, and made a note of the numbers. "I daresay now you think," he added, "that you see a good deal of the world, but I can tell you that I see more of it than you can dream of. I have spoken here with the very highest in the land and with the very lowest. They are all as one to me. I adapt my conversation to their capacity and station. The other day I had some of

the London swell mob here, and every day I have no end of tramps. (Three were then loitering near, to whom he afterwards gave coppers, according to his custom.) I can talk slang with a thief and religion with a clergyman. I am not afraid of talking with anyone."

Morbid love of notoriety, such as the hermit displayed, may in itself be evidence of insanity, but the insanity is scarcely of the kind which the law can take cognisance of. Dr. Tuke, however, cites various facts which certainly support the opinion he expressed. He says that even when young the hermit exhibited extreme eccentricity and self-will. Moreover, on the death of his mother, he kept her body in the house from October to the following January, and it was not until his brother, as executor, insisted upon the funeral that he allowed it to take place. But previous to this he had acted in a manner scarcely becoming in a sane man. He would occasionally hunt. "When he did so he rode either with his shirt outside, or in a nankeen suit, barefooted, and wearing a small cap; or bareheaded, his long, uncut hair streaming in the wind, presenting altogether a very remarkable appearance; the more so as he rode on a high-peaked saddle, a string passing round him being fastened to the peaks in front and behind, and a rope for his bridle and stirrups. . . . At other times he would ride in a carriage, his hair done up in curl papers."

Then, too, the hermit would not sign his name to any deed or paper bearing her Majesty's stamp, the reason he alleged being that she was not the rightful heir to the throne. He would not even use a receipt stamp, or a postage stamp, lest by so doing he should seem to admit the Queen's supremacy. At the same time he had not the slightest objection to make use of the current coin of the reign. He would not cash his dividend warrants, however, but allowed them to accumulate in the house. Later on he suspected that his food was being poisoned, especially the milk. He accordingly gave up the milk and confined his diet almost exclusively to bread, cheese, red herrings, and gin. All this certainly pointed to insanity. Indeed, efforts were at one time made to have him declared insane. He was examined by a Lunacy Commissioner, and his relatives and neighbours also gave testi-

mony. But nothing came of the inquiry, and the hermit was allowed to live on in his own peculiar manner.

In time his health began to break down. On one occasion he was found unconscious, and he afterwards stated that he had tasted nothing but water for three days, and had had no fire for months. He refused, however, to quit the filthy hole in which he had taken up his abode. A keeper was accordingly appointed to look after him. At last the end came. His health utterly gave way, and although every care and attention was bestowed upon him by his relatives, and he was removed from his dirty surroundings, he was too enfeebled to rally. He died on April 19th, 1874. From first to last he had lived his strange life at Redcoat's Green, for nearly a quarter of a century!

He is not likely to be soon forgotten in the district. During his lifetime popular credulity had already invested him with some of the attributes of the marvellous. Now that he is dead what tales must be told about him! Legends are no doubt gathering around his name, and perhaps in a generation or so he will rise to the dignity of a saint. It is not unlikely. A good deal of history and biography has no doubt taken shape under similar circumstances. Meanwhile a local poet in a neighbouring county has told his story in heroic verse, heroic, that is, in its audacious disregard of the restraints of metre, and in the unflinching boldness of its own free expression. This poem was purchased by me, a year or two since, from a hawker who was selling it in London by the primitive plan of calling with it from door to door. Only by quoting some of the most striking passages can anything like justice be done to this remarkable effusion. The author begins by assuring his readers that he is not about to tell a tale of fiction, but a history "most strange and yet true." He adds:—

"At a place between Stevenage and Hitchin,
By name it's called 'Redcoat's Green,'
The remains of a house is still standing,
Where a man of strange ways was once seen.
I cannot fairly describe in these verses
That wretched and comfortless home,
Where a man of good means spent years of his life
Without using soap, water, or comb;

From the crown of his head to the tips of his toes
Was 'as black as a sweep,' as the old saying goes;
It was a sad sight to see a man of such grace
With his matted long hair and dirty black face,
Not using his time or talents for good,
But more like a bogie or man of the wood."

The poet evidently thought highly of the hermit's mental capacity. He says:—

"Sometimes he would talk straight ahead for an hour
With those who enjoyed intellectual power:
His converse in general showed a mind stored with knowledge,
In youth he was trained at a good private college.
Works of great authors he must have well conned,
To quote from their writings he was commonly fond,
And from Shakespeare long pieces with ease he'd recite,
And provoke a sensation of mutual delight."

The closing scene is described in touching terms, and we learn that after the funeral

"Cartloads of ashes were cleared from his room,
So long undisturbed by shovel or broom.
These were all sifted and in them was found
Coin to the sum of ten or twelve pound."

The writer of the poem from which these extracts are taken is justly proud, it is evident, of his work. I am betraying no confidence when I state that his name, for he gives it at the end, is G. Cowley, and that his address is No. 5, Church Street, Luton. Is there any indiscretion in adding that, according to an announcement at the bottom of the page, two copies will be sent post free in return for two penny stamps?

EDWARD COPPING.

OUR NAVAL COALING-STATIONS IN THE EASTERN SEAS.

THIS will, I trust, be found an attractive topic, as it certainly is an important one. It forms only a part, however, of a vast subject; for our naval coaling-stations exist not in the Eastern Seas alone, but in the seas on both sides of the equator and in both hemispheres—indeed, in the seas everywhere all over the globe. So grand a subject as this cannot be handled properly in a single article, so I select one part of it, wherein the several points are connected and the considerations, so to speak, hang together. This part, then, relates to those stations which belong to the Eastern Seas from a British standpoint.

At the outset I must ask the reader to consider what is a naval coaling-station. The term is not of a scientific character and does not admit of precise definition. A coaling-station is, of course, a depôt whence our war vessels can draw supplies of coal, and in this age, when all such vessels are propelled by steam, they cannot venture a long way from home, or sweep far afield in the oceanic expanse in the event of war, unless they can rely on the services of such stations at convenient intervals of distance. A naval Power might possess great strength in its home waters, but would have no maritime influence for war elsewhere unless it possessed such stations. Without them no naval Power could acquire or retain a world-wide influence. It follows that if a naval Power, having possessed them, were to allow their destruction or capture by the enemy in war, then such loss would be fatal to maritime influence, and would go far to neutralise the effect of naval efforts in other directions. The application of these plain, almost elementary, principles to the case of England is obvious.

In these days a navy is needed not only to guard the shores of the country to which it belongs, but also to protect that country's commerce and colonies. A good coaling-station must be in a situation specially suited to certain requirements. It must be not more than a certain distance off from other stations. It must be in a commanding position strategically. It must dominate the trade routes by which mercantile vessels have to pass to and fro. It must be fortified and armed so as to be defensible by its own land resources, irrespective of any aid obtainable from war vessels. It ought, further, to be a place to which coals can be brought not only by the Government to which it belongs, but also one to which that article is naturally brought in the course of trade. Now, such places, possessing all these advantages and capabilities, are to be found in all parts of the globe, no doubt; still, they are not easily found. On the whole they are many in number, but their number is not indefinitely large; on the contrary, it is limited. Probably England has got most of them; certainly she possesses nearly all the best of them. Other naval Powers possess coaling-stations, but such stations are comparatively few and are, in strategic value, not at all comparable to the British stations.

Thus the zone of strategic and fortified coaling-stations with which the British Government has girdled the earth affects vitally the organisation of the Empire. It concerns the military and trade routes of the Mediterranean, of the Red Sea, of the Arabian Sea, of the Indian Ocean, of the Bay of Bengal, of the China Sea, of the Australasian Archipelago, of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. To describe all these positions would be beyond the scope of this article, so I shall advert, as I have said, only to those that concern the Eastern Seas.

Starting from England eastward, I need not allude to the great stations in the Mediterranean, namely, Gibraltar and Malta, to which we may now, perhaps, add a third, namely, Cyprus. These are, *inter alia*, coaling-stations, of course; but they are so much more besides, and their imperial importance is so manifest that I need not discuss them but may hasten on to the Red Sea. Now let anyone reflect on the nature and contents of the mail that starts weekly from

Suez eastwards. It carries all the official and non-official correspondence not only for the Indian Empire, but for Ceylon, for the Straits of Malacca, for China and Japan, and, lastly, for Australia. When it reaches Aden, and afterwards, it may divide itself into many branches; but the bulk and volume of this mighty mass of correspondence passing down the Red Sea is united as the trunk that shall, so to speak, put forth the branches. Surely this must be the largest, the most varied, and perhaps the most important of all the mails in the oceanic transit of the world. Commensurate with this mass of correspondence is the steam-borne commerce. The steamers specially built for the passage of the Suez Canal, and hence called "Ditchers," are freighted with all the specie and most of the valuable goods to and from India, Ceylon, Burmah, the Straits Settlements, China, Borneo, and Australia.

The whole of this enormous business is commanded by Aden, situated halfway between Suez and Bombay, and about a week's steaming from either place. The possession of this place is essential to the military protection of the Eastern trade—in the very broadest sense of the term Eastern—and of our communications with the East generally. The loss of it would in part compromise this trade and these communications. Aden is in the very first rank of British strongholds in the world, and on a par even with the Cape of Good Hope. Its place on the political map sustains a prestige producing that moral effect which doubles the value of material power. Situate on a volcanic island close to the coast of Arabia Felix, it exercises an influence over the south-west corner of Arabia. It controls the approaches to the mouth of the Red Sea from the East, though not the mouth itself. But it has a subordinate station in the rocky islet of Perim, which effectually commands the mouth. It is opposite to the African island of Socotra, now under British supervision, and to the African Somali coast. It would prevent any movements of the Italians or others on the African side of the Red Sea from proving dangerous to British interests. It is rightly styled the Gibraltar of the East, being environed by imposing rock-masses of plutonic origin, and being endowed by nature with unsurpassed advantages which only await the skill of the engineer to render it impregnable.

For many years after its acquisition by the British in the last generation, Aden was but imperfectly defended. Its natural strength sufficed to render it unapproachable from the land side. From the sea the approaches were always difficult for an enemy, and during the early part and the middle of this century there was hardly any possible naval enemy to prove troublesome or dangerous in the Eastern Seas. But within the latter half of the century the development of war vessels of the naval Powers of Europe has been such as to compel England not only to preserve a preponderance in line-of-battle ships and cruisers everywhere, but also to look to her naval bases. Foremost among these bases is Aden. Accordingly, during the last twenty years the Government of India has been strengthening the fortifications of Aden. The whole place, town, barracks, inner harbour, outer harbour, are all shut in from the sea by lofty and precipitous rocks. Rounding these rocks there is a navigable channel to the harbours. The forcing of this channel with a view to the bombardment of the harbour would be the object for the assailants to attain and for the defenders to prevent. The line can be absolutely commanded by the erection of batteries, which are being erected and will, it is to be hoped, be ere long complete. Doubtless the impregnability of Aden if not already accomplished will soon be so, inasmuch as the Government of India cannot but be sensible of the momentous consequence to India of this stronghold. The weak point in the position is the islet of Perim, already mentioned. We must render Perim impregnable as an appanage of Aden, or if not impregnable at least capable of holding its own against an enemy armed with modern appliances until assistance should arrive. It must be remembered that the possession of this islet is necessary for the protection of the Red Sea traffic, and that its loss would endanger that traffic absolutely, in the event of war, even although Aden might remain intact. Now this rocky desert islet is, in a certain sense, fortified, but there is doubt as to whether the fortifications have been rendered strong enough for the naval warfare of to-day.

I now quit the Gulf of Aden, between the Arabian and African shores, with face turned south-eastward, along the main line of Eastern commerce. And this line brings us straight to the western

shore of Ceylon. This island, situated below the inverted apex of the triangle of India, dominates the ocean routes for traffic beyond or eastward of India. It is about halfway between Aden and the Straits of Malacca, which form an obligatory point on the ocean highway to China. At some place or other on the coasts of this island we must have one coaling-station at least, perhaps more. The first point determined on by the Government of Ceylon is Colombo, on the western coast, as being the capital and seat of government; the old capital of Candy, in the interior, having been superseded by the better situation on the seaside. I should have supposed that Point de Galle—just south of Colombo, and at the extreme southern point of the island—would have been, from a naval and mercantile point of view, the best site for a coaling-station. It has, indeed, always been the calling-place and coaling-station for the main lines of steamers passing by Ceylon, and it possesses much more of mercantile coal than Colombo does. It has also natural advantages which render it inaccessible to an enemy. Whether he could bombard it, standing out in open sea, may be a question depending on the range of the defending armament. At all events he could not enter the harbour, the mouth of which has what sailors call a bar, with a narrow channel between reefs and breakers that can be passed only with the aid of buoys and pilots. To revert to Colombo, that coaling-station would be of value to the south Indian, the Chinese, and the Australian trade.

But further on the opposite or eastern shore of Ceylon there is the coaling-station of Trincomalee, a spacious, beautiful, and defensible harbour, that was for many years the naval headquarters for the Eastern Seas. Its naval importance has of late years become less than formerly, because of the rise of Bombay. But still it is of much consequence to the trade with eastern India and with Burmah. It might perhaps be asked why a second coaling-station in Ceylon should be necessary—would not one suffice? Well, in the event of war, certain war vessels might have to be detached to guard the large trade existing in the Bay of Bengal, relating to Calcutta, Madras, and to the several Burmese ports at or near the mouth of the Irawaddy. Now, unless such vessels had a coaling-station on the east side of Ceylon, in their own purview and within

sight of the waters they have to defend, they would have to go round the southern point of the island and resort to the western coast, thereby quitting for a moment their naval charge, which might be inconvenient or even dangerous.

Pursuing an easterly course we arrive at the next coaling-station, namely, Singapore, at the eastern end of the Straits of Malacca. The Malay peninsula elongates itself like a vast finger. Alongside of this great projection lies the island of Sumatra, with a narrow strait of sea between them, and this is the Strait of Malacca; midway in the strait is the British settlement of Malacca; at the north-western end lies the settlement of Penang, and at the south-western end the settlement of Singapore. The three together are styled the Straits Settlements by the British Government. Owing to the geographical situation of the large islands of Sumatra, Java, and Borneo, the Strait of Malacca has ever been the highway of navigation between Indian and Chinese waters. Moreover, this particular passage is essential to safe, speedy, and convenient navigation, which otherwise would have to make an extraordinary detour; so the possession of it affords us the mastery of the commercial communication for half the East, and gives us a dominating influence over the adjoining Malay States, and the loss of it would cause infinite embarrassment to the trade and communication with China and Japan. Singapore itself forms the headquarters of the Government of the Straits Settlements, which are constituted as a Crown colony. The place might appear on the map to be at the extremity of the peninsula; in reality it is an island just divided by a slender streak of water from the mainland. In this island is a fine indentation furnishing us with a deep-water harbour, the narrow mouth of which can be guarded by forts on each side, with another fort on an islet inside the harbour—at the end of which harbour, too, lies the town, and beyond that, again, the barracks for the garrison. The great coaling-wharves lie close to the narrow mouth, and there are kept the large stores of coal which have now for two generations supplied the main lines of steamers plying between India, China, and Australia. A moderate European force has always been maintained at Singapore for operations on land, which, on a comparatively small scale, have not been infrequent.

But protection against naval attack did not become a question of practical politics until recent years, when the increase of French and Russian squadrons in the China Seas opened our eyes to the possibility of Singapore being snatched from us by a *coup de main*. Since then the defences of the place have occupied the minds of both the local and the Imperial authorities, and it is hoped that the work either is or very shortly will be completed.

Proceeding north-eastwards, we approach the great coaling-station of Hong-Kong. The importance of this place will be so well known to British readers that I need not dilate upon it. But the case was some years ago so graphically summarised by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in its publication "The Truth About the Navy," that the passage may be quoted here.

"Hong-Kong, with the peninsula of Kowloon, is at once the Malta and Gibraltar of the China Seas. It is the last of the great series of stepping-stones by which our steamers make their way to the East. It is the base of our Chinese squadron. It contains the naval dockyard, where our ships refit; the graving docks, where they are scraped and repaired; and the stores of coal without which they cannot move. It is not only the naval and military base of our operations in the Further East; it is a great commercial *entrepôt*. In the spacious warehouses which, mile after mile, line the northern shore of the island is stored enormous wealth. It is the great mart of the East. Its spacious harbour is crowded with shipping, of which 5,000,000 tons enter every year. At its wharves are landed millions of pounds' worth of British manufactured goods, which from that distributing centre are sent off to almost every market in China. Hong-Kong is a little England, the creation of English energy, enterprise, and industry. Forty years ago it was a barren rock, inhabited by a few squalid fisherfolk. To-day it has a population of 160,000 souls, and a revenue of £250,000 a year. Of late years it has added sugar-refining to its other industries, and what with its banks, its manufactures, its newspaper, its tramway (now in construction), and its docks, it is one of the most thriving places in the world."

For many years the British Government was content to leave this great post with small defences. But within the last decade public opinion awoke to the fact that in the event of our naval squadron in Chinese waters being called away to chase or to fight an enemy, the British establishments in this island might fall a prey to a hostile cruiser. Among the many disastrous consequences of such an event there would be one particular

consequence, namely this, the loss of the coal supplies on which the ironclads must depend. Energetic steps have accordingly been taken to erect fortifications, which are needed not only on the north side of the island itself, but on the projecting parts of the mainland opposite, and also on more than one of the islets in the intermediate channel.

The importance of Hong-Kong has been stated above, to which may be added the consideration that the island virtually commands the approaches to the mouth of the Canton River, the main artery of Chinese commerce in the south. It is along this artery, too, that ultimately the communication may run to join the Burmese extension of railways. For all that, Hong-Kong will not alone suffice for the protection of the fast-growing British interests in Chinese waters. It lies, indeed, far down to the south, whereas we have treaty ports far to the north, and we have an increasing interest in Japan. To the north of Japan lies Vladivostok, the Russian naval station near the mouth of the Amoor. In the event of war we should need to draw coal supplies from Japan. Such supplies exist there now, indeed, and in British hands, but all this might change on the breaking out of war. Thus it is clear that, even with a well defended coaling-station at Hong-Kong, we still need another one to the north, somewhere in Japanese waters. The want of such a station is certainly a weak point in our imperial arrangements in this quarter. Now it so happens that we actually had for a short while a station in this very neighbourhood, namely, Port Hamilton, on the Corean coast, opposite Japan, the geographical situation of which was exactly suitable. Recently, however, to the surprise and regret of many, it was abandoned, and this, too, on the advice of naval authorities. Probably the harbour was not as good as might be desired. This would be a valid argument if other places were available; but if no other place can be found, then we ought to make the best of whatever may be vouchsafed to us by Providence. Perhaps, also, the authorities dreaded the necessity of undertaking the defences of this place with so many other fortifications then in hand. But now that these latter are nearly done we might well begin to fortify Port Hamilton, as the cost would not be excessive for a great nation and would be more

than repaid by the gain of a coaling-station in Japanese waters. If no better spot can be had, Port Hamilton might, indeed must, do, and must be made to answer. Though abandoned for the moment, it might be reoccupied at any time. The authorities will be answerable to the British nation not to let slip any fair opportunity of guarding British interests in this region.

Before concluding this survey of the coaling-stations, I must advert to one that is inchoate as yet, but is nevertheless of much importance for the future, and that is Thursday Island. The routes between India and north-eastern and eastern Australia converge upon the Torres Strait which separates Queensland and New Guinea. The north-eastern corner of the Australian continent shoots up with a great tongue of land that renders the strait narrow. Moreover, the navigation is difficult or dangerous, and there is only one channel now available. Impinging on this channel is a rock-formation that is called Thursday Island and is to be turned into a coaling-station. The strategic value must be manifest of the post that dominates the one navigable passage leading to eastern Australia, and that commands the strait between our rising colony and our new protectorate. The plans are ready, and so are all the arrangements save one, namely, that of finance, which latter is being adjusted between the Australian Colonies and the mother country.

Having thus reached the limit of the Eastern Seas, I must not proceed further, but leave the coaling-stations in the Southern and Western Seas for other occasions. But the points we have touched on—the mouth of the Red Sea, the great cape of Ceylon, the approach to the Bay of Bengal, the Strait of Malacca, the entrance to the Canton River, and the strait between Australia and New Guinea—will give the reader some idea of the unrivalled skill and success with which our countrymen have put their foot down on the dominating positions in the Eastern Seas. And it is satisfactory to note that our survey brings to light only one shortcoming, namely, the failure to secure a station near Japan, which fault will, however, we hope, be rectified. But the question at once arises, are these arrangements, apparently excellent, carried into effect actually? It is not possible for anyone writing in England to answer this question precisely. A complete report by military engineers of

authority would be necessary, and no such report has as yet been made. It is probable, however, that the works have all been begun and are well advanced, if not completed throughout. But the armament, which must consist of very heavy ordnance, is known to be a matter of difficulty as well as of consequence. Frequently interpellations have been addressed to Ministers in Parliament on this subject, and as frequently assurances have been given. But knowing the variety of the demands for heavy ordnance, and the regrettable shortness of manufacturing power in this respect—a shortness which is almost unaccountable in the case of such a country as England—the House will not believe in the guns arriving until they have actually arrived at their destination. But with the eye of Parliament fixed on the question, we may be sure that ere long the batteries will be both constructed and armed. The cost of all the coaling-stations which I have mentioned, both for works and guns, will hardly exceed £1,000,000 in all, and that is not much for such a purpose.

Before closing this article I should, perhaps, allude cursorily to the question whether we have rivals in the Eastern Seas. We have got nearly all the best places, and so far we are beyond the reach of rivalry. Still, we must never forget that France has important establishments at Saïgon, at the mouth of the Cambodia, which give her great influence in the Gulf of Siam, and that she may set up similar establishments at the mouth of the Red River in Tonquin, to the south of Hong-Kong. Russia, too, has establishments at the mouth of the Amoor, in a very high latitude, and has no coaling-station south of that. May Providence mercifully grant that we shall never be driven into war with either France or Russia, or with both combined; but if we were to be thus reluctantly driven, and if our national efforts were directed with that comprehensive energy which has rarely or never failed us in a crisis, then we have nothing to fear in the Eastern Seas at least. On the contrary, it might be found that our competitors had, by their establishments on the Cambodia and the Amoor, given hostages to the fortune of war, and that England had at the outset seized the naval bases of her opponents.

RICHARD TEMPLE.

THE SOLUTION.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART III.

IN Rome I kept quiet three or four days, hoping to hear from Mrs. Rushbrook; I even removed myself as much as possible from the path of Guy de Montaut. I observed preparations going forward in the house occupied during the winter by Mrs. Goldie, and, in passing, I went so far as to question a servant who was tinkering a flower-stand in the doorway, and from whom I learned that the *padrona* was expected at any hour. Wilmerding, however, returned to Rome without her; I perceived it from meeting him in the Corso—he didn't come to see me. This might have been accidental, but I was willing to consider that he avoided me, for it saved me the trouble of avoiding him. I couldn't bear to see him—it made me too uncomfortable; I was always thinking that I ought to say something to him that I couldn't say, or that he would say something to me that he didn't. As I had remarked to Mrs. Goldie, it was impossible for me now to allude in invidious terms to Veronica, and the same licence on his side would have been still less becoming. And yet it hardly seemed as if we could go on like that. He couldn't quarrel with me avowedly about his prospective wife; but he might have quarrelled with me ostensibly about something else. Such subtleties, however (I began to divine), had no place in his mind, which was presumably occupied with the conscientious effort to like Veronica—as a matter of duty—since he was doomed to spend his life with her. Wilmerding was capable, for a time, of giving himself up to this effort: I don't know how long it would have lasted. Our relations were sensibly changed, inasmuch as after my singular interview with Mrs. Goldie, the day

following her daughter's betrothal, I had scruples about presenting myself at her house as if on the old footing.

She came back to town with the girls, immediately showing herself in her old cardinalesque chariot of the former winters, which was now standing half the time before the smart shops in the Corso and Via Condotti. Wilmerding perceived, of course, that I had suddenly begun to stay away from his future mother-in-law's; but he made no observation about it—a reserve of which I afterwards understood the reason. This was not, I may say at once, any revelation from Mrs. Goldie of my unmannerly appeal to her. Montaut amused himself with again taking up his habits under her roof; the entertainment might surely have seemed mild to a man of his temper, but he let me know that it was richer than it had ever been before—poor Wilmerding showed such a face there. When I answered that it was just his face that I didn't want to see, he declared that I was the best sport of all, with my tergiversations and superstitions. He pronounced Veronica *très-embellie* and said that he was only waiting for her to be married to make love to her himself. I wrote to Mrs. Rushbrook that I couldn't say she had served me very well, and that now the Goldies had quitted her neighbourhood I was in despair of her doing anything. She took no notice of my letter, and I availed myself of the very first Sunday to drive out to Albano and breakfast with her. Riding across the Campagna now suddenly appeared to me too hot and too vain.

Mrs. Rushbrook told me she had not replied to me because she was about to return to Rome: she expected to see me almost as soon as, with the Holy Father's mediæval post-office, a letter would be delivered to me. Meanwhile, she couldn't pretend that she had done anything for me; and she confessed that the more she thought of what I wanted the more difficult it seemed. She added, however, that she now had a project, which she declined to disclose to me. She contradicted herself a little, for she said at one moment that she hadn't the heart to spoil poor Veronica's happiness and at the next that it was precisely to carry out her device (such a secret as it was, even from the girl!) that she had decided to quit Albano earlier than she had intended.

"How can you spoil Veronica's happiness when she won't have

any happiness? How can she have any happiness with a man who will have married her in such absurd conditions?"

"Oh, he's charming, Mr. Wilmerding—everything you told me of him is true: it's a case of pure chivalry. He'll be very kind to her—he'll be sorry for her. Besides, when once he takes her away from her mother, Veronica will be all right. Seeing more of them, that way, before they left Frascati, I became ever so much interested in them. There is something in Veronica; when once she's free it will come out."

"How will she ever be free? Her mother will be on the top of them—she'll stick to them—she'll live with them."

"Why so, when she has her other daughters to work for?"

"Veronica will be rich—I'm sure Mrs. Goldie will want to enjoy that."

"They'll give her money—Mr. Wilmerding won't haggle!"

"How do you know—have you asked him?"

"Oh, I know," smiled Mrs. Rushbrook. "You know I saw them again. Besides," she added, "he'll escape with his wife—he'll take her to America."

"Veronica won't go—she'll hate that part of it."

"Why will she hate it?"

"Oh, it isn't 'smart.'"

"So much the better. I should like to go there."

"Very good," said I. "I daresay I shall be sent there by the Foreign Office some day. I'll take you over."

"Oh, I don't want to go with *you*," said Mrs. Rushbrook, plainly. And then she added that she should try to get back to Rome by the next Thursday.

"How was it you saw so much of them before they went away?" I suddenly asked her.

"Why, they returned my visit—the queer young couple. Mr. Wilmerding brought her over to see me the day after we breakfasted with him. They stayed three or four hours—they were charming."

"Oh, I see; he didn't tell me."

Mrs. Rushbrook coloured a little. "You say that in a tone! I didn't ask him not to."

"I didn't say you did. However, he has had very little chance: we have scarcely spoken since that day."

"You are very wrong—he's such a good fellow."

"I like the way you give me information about him, because you've seen him three times."

"I've seen him four—I've seen him five," Mrs. Rushbrook protested. "After they had been here I went over to Mrs. Goldie's.

"Oh, to speak to her?" I cried, eagerly.

"I spoke to her, of course—it was to bid her good-bye. Mr Wildmerding was there—that made another time. Then he came here once again. In fact, the next day——" Mrs. Rushbrook continued.

"He came alone?"

She hesitated a moment. "Yes, he walked over. He said he was so nervous."

"Ah, to talk it over, you mean?" I exclaimed.

"To talk it over?"

"Your plan, your doing something."

Mrs. Rushbrook stared; then she burst into merriment. "You don't suppose we have spoken of that! Imagine his knowing it!'

I stood corrected—I perceived that wouldn't have done. "But what then did he come for?" I asked.

"He came to see me—as you do."

"Oh, as I do!" I laughed.

"He came because he feels so awkward with the girl."

"Did he tell you that?"

"You told me yourself! We never spoke of Veronica."

"Then what *did* you speak of?"

"Of other things. How you catechise!"

"If I catechise it's because I thought it was all for me."

"For you—and for him. I went to Frascati again," said Mrs. Rushbrook.

"Lord, and what was that for?"

"It was for you," she smiled. "It was a kindness, if they are so uncomfortable together. I relieve them, I know I do!"

"Gracious, you might live with them! Perhaps that's the way out of it."

"We took another walk in the Villa Mondragone," my hostess continued. "Augusta Goldie went with us. It went off beautifully."

"Oh, then it's all right," I said, picking up my hat.

Before I took leave of her Mrs. Rushbrook told me that she certainly would move to Rome on the Thursday—or on the Friday. She would give me a sign as soon as she was settled. And she added: "I daresay I shall be able to put my idea into execution. But I shall tell you only if it succeeds."

I don't know why I felt, at this, a slight movement of contrariety; at any rate I replied: "Oh, you had better leave them alone."

On the Wednesday night of that week I found, on coming in to go to bed, Wilmerding's card on my table, with "Good-bye—I'm off to-morrow for a couple of months" scrawled on it. I thought it an odd time for him to be "off"—I wondered whether anything had happened. My servant had not seen him; the card had been transmitted by the porter, and I was obliged to sleep upon my mystification. As soon as possible the next morning I went to his house, where I found a postchaise, in charge of one of the old *vetturini* and prepared for a journey, drawn up at his door. While I was in the act of asking for him Wilmerding came down, but to my regret, for it was an obstacle to explanations, he was accompanied by his venerable chief. The American Minister had lately come back, and he leaned affectionately on his young secretary's shoulder. He took, or almost took, the explanations off our hands; he was aggressively cheerful, said that his young friend wanted a little change, that he had fixed it all right, and that he was going to see him off, to ride with him a part of the way. The General (have I not mentioned that he was a general?) climbed into the vehicle and waited, like a sitting Cicero, while Wilmerding gave directions for the stowage of two or three more parcels. I looked at him hard as he did this and thought him flushed and excited. Then he put out his hand to me and I held it, with my eyes still on his face. We were a little behind the carriage, out of sight of the General.

"Frankly—what's the matter?" I asked.

"It's all over—they don't want me."

"Don't want you?"

"Veronica can't—she told me yesterday. I mean she can't marry me," Wilmerding explained, with touching lucidity. "She doesn't care for me enough."

"Ah, thank God!" I murmured, with great relief, pressing his hand.

The General put his head out of the chaise. "If there was a railroad in this queer country I guess we should miss the train."

"All the same, I'm glad," said Wilmerding.

"I should think you would be."

"I mean I'm glad I did it."

"You're a *preux chevalier*."

"No, I aint." And, blushing, he got into the carriage, which rolled away.

Mrs. Rushbrook failed to give me the "sign" she promised, and two days after this I went, to get news of her, to the small hotel at which she intended to alight and to which she had told me, on my last seeing her at Albano, that she had sent her maid to make arrangements. When I asked if her advent had been postponed, the people of the inn exclaimed that she was already there—she had been there since the beginning of the week. Moreover she was at home, and on my sending up my name she responded that she should be happy to see me. There was something in her face, when I came in, that I didn't like, though I was struck with her looking unusually pretty. I can't tell you now why I should have objected to that. The first words I said to her savoured, no doubt, of irritation: "Will you kindly tell me why you have been nearly a week in Rome without letting me know?"

"Oh, I've been occupied—I've had other things to do."

"You don't keep your promises."

"Don't I? You shouldn't say that," she answered, with an amused air.

"Why haven't I met you out—in this place where people meet every day?"

"I've been busy at home—I haven't been running about."

I looked about me, asked after her little girl, congratulated her on the brightness she imparted to the most *banal* room as soon as

she began to live in it, took up her books, fidgeted, waited for her to say something about Henry Wilmerding. For this, however, I waited in vain; so that at last I broke out: "I suppose you know he has gone?"

"Whom are you talking about?"

"Veronica's *promesso sposo*. He quitted Rome yesterday."

She was silent a moment; then she replied—"I didn't know it."

I thought this odd, but I believed what she said, and even now I have no doubt it was true. "It's all off," I went on: "I suppose you know that."

"How do *you* know it?" she smiled.

"From his own lips; he told me, at his door, when I bade him good-bye. Didn't you really know he had gone?" I continued.

"My dear friend, do you accuse me of lying?"

"Never in the world—only of joking. I thought you and he had become so intimate."

"Intimate—in three or four days? We have had very little communication."

"How, then, did you know his marriage was off?"

"How you cross-examine one! I knew it from Veronica."

"And is it *your* work?"

"Ah, mine—call it rather yours: you set me on."

"Is that what you've been so busy with that you couldn't send me a message?" I asked.

"What shall I say? It didn't take long."

"And how did you do it?"

"How shall I tell you—how shall I tell?"

"You said you would tell me. Did you go to Mrs. Goldie?"

"No, I went to the girl herself."

"And what did you say?"

"Don't ask me—it's my secret. Or rather, it's hers."

"Ah, but you promised to let me know if you succeeded."

"Who can tell? It's too soon to speak of success."

"Why so—if he has gone away?"

"He may come back."

"What will that matter if she won't take him?"

"Very true—she won't."

"Ah, what did you do to her?" I demanded, very curious.

Mrs. Rushbrook looked at me with strange, smiling eyes. "I played a bold game."

"Did you offer her money?"

"I offered her yours."

"Mine? I have none. The bargain won't hold."

"I offered her mine, then."

"You might be serious—you promised to tell me," I repeated.

"Surely not. All I said was that if my attempt didn't succeed I would not tell you."

"That's an equivocation. If there was no promise, and it was so disagreeable, why did you make the attempt?"

"It was disagreeable to me, but it was agreeable to you. And now, though you goaded me on, you don't seem delighted."

"Ah, I'm too curious—I wonder too much."

"Well, be patient," said Mrs. Rushbrook, "and with time everything will probably be clear to you."

I endeavoured to conform to this injunction, and my patience was so far rewarded that a month later I began to have a suspicion of the note that Mrs. Rushbrook had sounded. I quite gave up Mrs. Goldie's house, but Montaut was in and out of it enough to give me occasional news of *ces dames*. He had been infinitely puzzled by Veronica's retractation and Wilmerding's departure: he took it almost as a personal injury, the postponement of the event that would render it proper for him to make love to the girl. Poor Montaut was destined never to see that attitude legitimated, for Veronica Goldie never married. Mrs. Rushbrook, somewhat to my surprise, accepted on various occasions the hospitality of the Honourable Blanche—she became a frequent visitor at Casa Goldie. I was therefore in a situation not to be ignorant of matters relating to it, the more especially as for many weeks after the conversation I have last related my charming friend was remarkably humane in her treatment of me—kind, communicative, sociable—encouraging me to come and see her, and consenting often to some delightful rummaging Roman stroll. But she would never tolerate, on my lips, the slightest argument in favour of a union more systematic; she once said, laughing: "How can we possibly marry when we are

so impoverished? Didn't we spend every penny we possess to buy off Veronica?" This was highly fantastic, of course, but there was just a sufficient symbolism in it to minister to my unsatisfied desire to know what had really taken place.

I seemed to make it out a little better when, before the winter had fairly begun, I learned from both of my friends that Mrs. Goldie had decided upon a change of base, a new campaign altogether. She had got some friends to take her house off her hands; she was quitting Rome, embarking on a scheme of foreign travel, going to Naples, proposing to visit the East, to get back to England for the summer, to *promener* her daughters, in short, in regions hitherto inaccessible and unattempted. This news pointed to a considerable augmentation of fortune on the part of the Honourable Blanche, whose conspicuous thrift we all knew to be founded on slender possessions. If she was undertaking expensive journeys it was because she had "come into" money—a reflection that didn't make Mrs. Rushbrook's refusal to enlighten my ignorance a whit less tormenting. When I said to this whimsical woman, as I did several times, that she really oughtn't to leave me so in the dark, her reply was always the same, that the matter was all too delicate—she didn't know how she had done, there were some transactions so tacit, so made up of subtle *sousentendus*, that you couldn't describe them. So I groped for the missing link without finding it—the secret of how it had been possible for Mrs. Rushbrook to put the key of Wilmerding's coffers into Mrs. Goldie's hand.

I was present at the large party the latter lady gave as her leave-taking of her Roman friends, and as soon as I stood face to face with her I recognised that she had had much less "feeling" than I about our meeting again. I might have come at any time. She was good-natured, in her way, she forgot things and was not rancorous: it had now quite escaped her that she had turned me out of the house. The air of prosperity was in the place, the shabby past was sponged out. The tea was potent, the girls had all new frocks, and Mrs. Goldie looked at me with an eye that seemed to say that I might still have Veronica if I wanted. Veronica was now a fortune, but I didn't take it up.

Wilmerding came back to Rome in February, after Casa Goldie, as we had known it, was closed. In his absence I had been at the American Legation on various occasions—no *chancellerie* in Europe was steeped in dustier leisure—and the good General confided to me that he missed his young friend *as* a friend, but so far as missing him as a worker went (there *was* no work), "Uncle Sam" might save his salary. He told me he had fixed it all right and Wilmerding had taken three months to cross the Atlantic and see his people. He had doubtless important arrangements to make and copious drafts to explain. They must have been extraordinarily obliging, his people, for Mrs. Goldie (to finish with her), was for the rest of her days able to abjure cheap capitals and follow the chase where it was doubtless keenest—among the lordly herds of her native land. If Veronica never married the other girls did, and Miss Goldie, disencumbered and bedizened, reigned as a beauty, a good deal contested, for a great many years. I think that after her sisters went off she got her mother much under control, and she grew more and more to resemble her. She is dead, poor girl, her mother is dead—I told you everyone is dead. Wilmerding is dead—his wife is dead.

The subsequent life of this ingenious woman was short: I doubt whether she liked America as well as she had had an idea she should, or whether it agreed with her. She had put me off my guard that winter, and she put Wilmerding a little off his, too, I think, by going down to Naples just before he came back to Rome. She reappeared there, however, late in the spring—though I don't know how long she stayed. At the end of May, that year, my own residence in Rome terminated. I was assigned to a post in the north of Europe, with orders to proceed to it with speed. I saw them together before I quitted Italy, my two good friends, and then the truth suddenly came over me. As she said herself—for I had it out with her, fearfully, before I left—I had only myself to thank for it. I had made her think of him, I had made her look at him, I had made her do extraordinary things. You won't be surprised to hear they were married less than two years after the service I had induced her to render me.

Ah, don't ask me what really passed between them—that was

their own affair. There are "i's" in the matter that have never been dotted, and in later years, when my soreness had subsided sufficiently to allow me a certain liberty of mind, I often wondered and theorised. I was sore for a long time and I never even thought of marrying another woman: that "i" at least I can dot. It made no difference that she probably never would have had me. She fell in love with him, of course—with the idea of him, secretly, in her heart of hearts—the hour I told her, in my distress, of the *beau trait* of which he had been capable. She didn't know him, hadn't seen him, positively speaking; but she took a fancy to the man who had that sort of sense of conduct. Some women would have despised it, but I was careful to pick out the one to whom it happened most to appeal. I dragged them together, I held them together. When they met he liked her for the interest he was conscious she already took in him, and it all went as softly as when you tread on velvet. Of course I had myself to thank for it, for I not only cornered her with Wilmerding—I cornered her with Veronica.

What she said to Veronica was no doubt that it was all a mistake (she appealed to the girl's conscience to justify her there), but that he would pay largely for his mistake. Her warrant for that was simply one of the subtle *sousentendus* of which she spoke to me when I attacked her and which are the medium of communication of people in love. She took upon herself to speak for him—she despoiled him, at a stroke, in advance, so that when she married him she married a man of relatively small fortune. This was disinterested, at least. There was no bargain between them, as I read it—it all passed in the air. He divined what she had promised for him and he immediately performed. Fancy how she must have liked him then! Veronica believed, her mother believed, because he had already given them a specimen of his disposition to do the handsome thing. I had arranged it all in perfection. My only consolation was that I had done what I wanted; but do you think that was sufficient?

HENRY JAMES.

STUDIES IN CHARACTER.

II.

MR. CHARLES STEWART PARNELL, M.P.

THOUGH not the most sympathetic, Mr. Parnell is by far the most subtle and interesting figure in Irish politics: impenetrable, inscrutable, mysterious, a modern sphinx. To be acquainted with him is by no means to know him. He has few intimates, no confidential friends, and it is possible to be liked by him, and to visit in his house year after year, and to learn only two things about his character—its attraction and its strangeness.

In the outer world it is commonly supposed that the "Leader," through insolence and pride, deliberately erects a barrier between himself and the faithful eighty-five. Everyone has heard that when Mr. Parnell travels with a member of his party he takes a first-class ticket for himself and a second-class one for his colleague; that no one may omit the prefix "Mr." to his name, and a host of kindred legends. Nothing is further from the truth. Mr. Parnell may have graver faults, but of snobbery he has no trace; his manner is the same to everyone—gentle or simple—always dignified, amiable, indifferent; of pride he has abundance, but it is not pride of birth; he has scorn of many things, but he despises no man either for his misfortunes or his disadvantages. The House of Commons has long ceased to be exclusively an assembly of gentlemen: in every party there are now men of every class, but it is admitted that the party led by Mr. Parnell is exceptionally "mixed." At the present moment there are, I think, only about fifteen men in it of the landed gentry class—the majority are barristers, doctors, solicitors, journalists, with a considerable sprinkling of business men and

tradesmen. That is no secret, and in the eyes of Mr. Parnell no disgrace. Well-born and an aristocrat by temperament, he is democratic by sympathy and opinion. He made his entry into the House as the disciple and close friend of Mr. Biggar, having had, even in those young days, acumen to perceive the honesty and strength of Biggar's character. The Irish party is now so large that we forget that as recently as '75 the obstructives (denounced by the Home Rule party of that day) were two in number—J. G. Biggar and Charles Stewart Parnell, the young newly-elected member for Meath. True, they received the fitful and uncertain aid of two gifted though unstable men, Frank Hugh O'Donnell and John O'Connor Power; but upon Biggar and Parnell fell the burden and with it the odium of obstructive policy.

Mr. Parnell was the last man whom the superficial observer might have expected to find linked with such a companion, and committed to such a policy. By race he is English and American, and he was educated at English schools and at a Cambridge college; by creed he is a Protestant, and by position a landlord. At that time he had given few indications of the indomitable firmness of his character, or of his remarkable mental powers; he was a tall, well-built man of eight-and-twenty, with a delicately-modelled face and a scrupulously correct appearance, and as he was fair-haired, quiet, retiring, and unassuming, it was an obvious conclusion that there was little grit in this country gentleman. Then, too, it became apparent that Mr. Parnell suffered from the strangest, most old-fashioned, most irrational defect: he was, and is to this day, extremely superstitious; he has never been willing to sit in a room where three candles were alight; green, though the patriotic hue, he has always professed to hold unlucky. It must, however, be admitted that the shade chosen by Irish Nationalists might well provoke a shudder for æsthetic reasons. But, be this as it may, Mr. Parnell can tolerate nothing green. The green slippers, the green braces, the green-trimmed dressing-gowns, that unknown enthusiasts shower on the Irish leader, are all buried in cupboards out of sight, and when the freedom of Dublin City was about to be conferred on him he requested that the lining of the casket might not be green. Purple, like the heather, he suggested, was his favourite colour, and emi-

nently fortunate. Whence comes this Eastern strain of superstition of which everyone who knows Mr. Parnell has some illustration to supply? His father's family hails originally from Cheshire, although it has been for many generations naturalised in Ireland. Parnell the poet was of this stock; and a direct ancestor of the Irish leader, one John Parnell, sat in the Irish House of Commons more than a century and a-half ago, while a son of this John—afterwards Sir John—was Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer in 1787. This was the Parnell called by Jonah Barrington "the incorruptible," and he and his son Henry were both in the Irish House of Commons at the time of the Union, and unpurchasable opponents of that measure. Later they both sat in the United Parliament, and the son was Secretary for War in Lord Grey's Ministry for 1832, Paymaster of the Forces in the Administration of Lord Melbourne, and in 1841 was created first Baron Congleton. John Henry Parnell, of Avondale, father of the Irish leader, was the nephew of Lord Congleton, and grandson of Sir John. He married a daughter of the American admiral, Charles Stewart, who in 1815 captured the British vessels *Cyane* and *Levant*.

Charles Stewart Parnell was born at his father's home, Avondale, in Wicklow, in 1846, and in appearance, and, probably, in character, resembles the American grandfather whose name he bears. He is not much of a student of literature, and, to put it mildly, he has not the lyric temperament. Few, even of public men, have read so little as he did at Cambridge. He has been persistently negligent of books of every sort. He never speaks of himself, never writes about himself, and, to all appearance, never thinks about himself; he is the least egoistic, least introspective, least self-analytical of men; the workings of his own mind, the formation of his own character, do not interest him, and he is a purely "objective" personality. As a child and a boy his tastes were all for science, mechanics, and engineering, and these are still his relaxations and his hobbies. If he reads at all, he is a student of specialist journals of the class of *Engineering*. When he can snatch a few days' holiday he generally devotes them to machine-making. He professes to be very fond of music, for reasons undefinable, since it is well known that he can hardly distinguish one tune from another.

Unlike so many of his colleagues, he had reached manhood before he gave any indication of the turn his life was destined to take. Mr. John Dillon is a son of John Dillon, the rebel of '48. When he was born his father was in exile, and among the earliest recollections of his boyhood are memories of despairing tenants, evicted with the cruel hardships and injustice of the olden days, seeking legal redress from his father, then a pardoned rebel and a barrister in Dublin. Mr. O'Brien, too, learned Nationalism and the futility of physical force at his father's knee, and Mr. Healy was a Nationalist as a boy. But although Mr. Parnell's mother has always been more Irish than the Irish, and although her home in Dublin was a safe house of refuge in the fine romantic old Fenian days, Mr. Parnell held aloof until the affair of the Manchester rescue in 1867, when he suddenly threw in his lot on the Irish side. The event, now half forgotten in England, was calculated to rouse young blood. Mr. Parnell had been of age barely three months when he heard that the prison van that contained two convicted Fenians had been stopped in broad daylight in the streets of Manchester, on its passage from the police-court to the gaol. At the desperate risk of their own lives, a handful of Fenians had determined on the rescue of their friends, and before a defence could be attempted the police escort was dispersed, the horses shot, and the rescuers had called on Brett, the constable within, to deliver up the keys. But gallantry is not the monopoly of enthusiasm. Brett refused, and someone in the crowd called to Allen, the leader of the Fenians, to open the door by firing off the lock. Unhappily, Brett at that moment was looking through the keyhole to see what was going on outside, and the bullet, intended only to break the lock, gave him a mortal wound. A woman, one of the prisoners within, took the keys from the dead man's pocket and dropped them out through the ventilator; the door was opened, and in the confusion that ensued the prisoners escaped, but five men were arrested, tried for the murder of Brett, and all found guilty. Against one of these evidence was so slight that the Press reporters present at his trial signed a petition for his release, and on further investigation it was found that he was the wrong man, his arrest a blunder, and the finding of the jury an error. A second was reprieved in consideration of his being an American

citizen; but with no new trial the remaining three, Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, were publicly hanged in Manchester. In Ireland the rescue was, and always will be, regarded as a valiant, a devoted, and a patriotic deed. The men are called martyrs, and their initials, A.L.O'B., are to-day a power to conjure up the forces of disaffection, while the ballad, "God Save Ireland," written by Mr. T. D. Sullivan in commemoration of their death, has been accepted as the National Anthem of disaffected Ireland.

Even in England much sympathy was felt for the rebels. John Bright, John Stuart Mill, and Mr. Swinburne each raised a cry for mercy, and though the young Wicklow landlord had then no public voice to lift, the death of these three young men appealed to the strongest instincts of his nature. He thought their doom unjust; he thought three lives too great a fine for a gallant lawless act; he thought the deliberate hanging of the three a greater crime than the accidental shooting of the one, and contempt for cruelty and injustice are the keynotes of his nature. His feeling against these faults never appears to reach the heat of hatred and is too scornful for that passion; he is too disdainful of their meanness. It is now a matter of history, not of opinion, that much injustice has been done to Mr. Parnell, and it is admitted that he has borne the most dire imputations simply because he was too proud to explain himself to those who misconceived him, and too scornful of men, who, for party ends, would bring false charges against a political opponent. Englishmen think he might look near home, in the pages of *United Ireland;* but (alas that it should be so!) even the blackest and foulest charges that it has made have been proved up to the hilt. Moreover, Mr. Parnell himself is incapable of this kind of guerilla warfare; he has none of the instincts of the journalist, and his attacks are against systems and classes, never against individuals. He is willing to let his followers use the weapon of personality if they wish, but he has no personal taste for it, and there is no strain of vindictiveness or spite in his character. To be sure, he is the obstructionist of obstructionists, and the apostle of boycotting.

Obstruction is not a beautiful policy, nor boycotting the weapon of heroes: it is impossible to feel moral enthusiasm for

either; they are effectual and have succeeded when nobler means have failed, and that is the best that can be said for them. It is with them that Mr. Parnell has won his victories, and his whole policy has been a policy of importunity, exasperation, and intimidation. But if he has worked with ugly tools he has always used them openly, fairly, without spite or meanness, and his career has been singularly little swayed by personal liking or disliking either for good or ill. The scornfulness, too, that plays so large a part in his character is always turned upon things truly contemptible; against cant and hypocrisy and falseness; against oppression and cruelty and insolence; never against weakness, or misfortune, or humble birth, or want of *savoir faire*. Mr. Parnell leads a motley company, but he has never blushed for the roughness of a colleague, and no man ever smarts in his presence under a sense of social inferiority. He has the reputation of being proud, and proud no doubt he is. But although the "Suspects" in Kilmainham were of very varied social standing, and companionship there was as close, as inevitable, and as monotonous as on a voyage, no one throughout those months ever saw Mr. Parnell assume a "stand-off" demeanour or indulge a fit of ill-humour. To an anxious, nervous man the confinement, the restrictions, the partial ignorance of all that went on outside, the fretting knowledge that all was going badly, must have been inexpressibly galling. Mr. Parnell's health visibly suffered, but his spirits never.

He is extremely loyal to his party in the House and astonishingly tolerant of the scenes that men of vivacious temper (unversed in the tormenting arts of public schools) are sometimes betrayed into making. On these occasions the sympathy of Mr. Parnell, though his own self-control is iron, is for the humiliated and smarting delinquent, not for the assemblage that can delight in the mental sufferings of a fellow creature, and that by sneer, and scornful laugh, and supercilious smile, and taunting word, provokes and harries a quick-tempered man beyond the limit of his endurance. Mr. Parnell is neither accustomed to bully nor to tease. It is no pleasure to him to inflict even moderate annoyance or suffering; he has no pity for the cruel and no sympathy for cant, or clap-trap, or hypocrisy of any kind; and it must be conceded

that this disdain for the commonest of failings has led him into political blunders of the gravest kind. During the early years of his career, Mr. Parnell earned a great amount of odium in England by his steady and unexplained refusal to denounce outrages unless the Government would pledge itself to denounce evictions. To English people this appeared immoral, barbarous, and cruel: if Mr. Parnell thought evictions wrong he was bound to denounce them, but if he thought outrages wrong he was bound to denounce those also. Your neighbour's sin is no justification of your own.

Ethically, they were right. Mr. Parnell, as a great moral force in Ireland, was bound by humanity and moral law to denounce publicly the acts of desperation, and intimidation, and revenge, that he deplored. But England sees the mote in an Irish brother's eye plainer than the beam that blinds her own: as fire drives out fire, so pity pity. Mr. Parnell's sympathies went with the homeless human creatures, of whom seven thousand were turned on to the roadside in three winter months: well-housed, well-fed, well-clothed (albeit in a prison), he could not bring himself to denounce the barbarity of men desperate with starvation and maddened by the clamour of their hungry, shivering children, or of those who sought by intimidation to save their own family from such a fate. Mr. Parnell was mistaken: two wrongs never make a right; but he was not more heartless than his judges. While English statesmen publicly, and Irish agitators privately, were lamenting the cruelty practised on innocent, defenceless, creatures, other creatures as innocent and as defenceless, and nearer of kin to us, were dying in ditches, of hunger, and cold, and typhus, because famine had fallen on the country, and the absentee landlord would not suffer his tenants the shelter of the roof that they had raised if, through destitution, they could not pay the rent. Mr. Parnell, like all his family is extremely, even excessively, fond of animals; but he did not believe in a sympathy for suffering that stopped short at the human victim, and, misjudging as well as misjudged, thought it cant and hypocrisy. Of course it was nothing of the kind; but before we feel sure that we sympathise with the suffering, we must remember that we fish and hunt and harry innocent, defenceless creatures

in sheer amusement ; that we shoot tame pheasants and pigeons in the leg, and leave the tender creatures to die of suffering and loss of blood as miserably as an Irish hamstrung cow ; that, when we blew the Sepoys from the guns, we inflicted a punishment that they believed eternal ; and that we go in thousands to be amused by staring at the affliction of our fellow creatures in Mr. Barnum's "Museum of Living Curiosities."

Still, Mr. Parnell's silence was an error, a sacrifice to that pride which is the mother of so much blundering as well as of all sin. Apart from the question of right, it would have been sagacious to speak. In Ireland speech would have done him no harm ; it would in England have done him a great deal of good. But, happily for himself, Mr. Parnell has long been indifferent to English public opinion ; he had lived too long in England to share the misconceptions of many of his more purely Irish colleagues, yet when the career of obstruction was embarked upon he had to school himself to absolute indifference to English opinion. Unconsciously the House of Commons helped him very much, and the Press more : when the House denounced him for a speech he never made, and howled him down each time he rose to repudiate it ; when it suspended for obstructive speaking a member who had not even been present during the debate ; when a leading paper published and pledged itself to prove genuine a forgery accepted without even a suspicion of truth, and the House preferred to believe an anonymous attack to the word of a member of its own body, it became very easy to a man of Mr. Parnell's nature to disregard the public opinion of England.

It is constantly thrown in Mr. Parnell's teeth that he has no respect for the dignity of the House, but those who make this charge should remember the particular form in which that dignity has presented itself to his consideration : it has mocked at poverty, at infirmity, and has goaded men of quick temper and excitable race beyond the limits of human endurance ; it has taken, as proved, unsupported anonymous charges, and before boycotting was advised in Ireland it was practised extensively at Westminster. We must remember these things ; must remember that Mr. Parnell has been plainly told that his word cannot be accepted unless sup-

ported by an oath that would expose him to a trial for perjury if he foreswore himself, before we express surprise that he does not care for the dignity of the House. We must remember that he is well-born, and, being an Englishman by education, able to measure the full extent of the insult, before we wonder that the good opinion of his own country and of his mother's suffices him, and that he cares little for the dignity of an Assembly that frankly admits it will believe an English newspaper rather than the leader of the whole Irish race. As to his own dignity, he is never in any trouble about that at all; it is as natural to him to be dignified as to breathe, and in no stage of his career has his dignity ever yet failed him. In person he is as stately as a Hapsburg, and in manner almost cold: socially, he may be described as having an amiable iciness of demeanour, and his appearance in a private gathering is generally followed by an abatement of noise such as when Royalty honours an assemblage with its presence.

Mr. Dillon bears the same social reputation, and Mr. Parnell has been known to describe a festivity, at which both were present, graphically thus: "After Dillon and I had sufficiently depressed the people, we had a little dancing"—the truth being that a harassed and anxious public man is not always able to shake off his cares and take interest in introductions, felicitations, and attentions that appear trivial compared to affairs of State. Among his friends, however, Mr. Dillon is the most genial and sympathetic companion, while about Mr. Parnell there always hangs an atmosphere of reserve, coldness, calculation, and deliberation; he is never expansive, and never feels the human need to express himself and be understood. His finely cut face, with deep expressive eyes, and strong, firm chin, has a strange impenetrable look, fascinating and haunting: like its owner it is dignified, serene, sphinx-like, mysterious. No one could be less like the typical Irishman than the member for that Celtic stronghold, Cork City; he has no brogue; Americans reproach him with "a strong English accent." Irish and English ears are not sensitive to this defect; to them he appears to have no accent at all, but his cold, clear voice has every now and then a slightly nasal intonation. His voice and way of speaking are the coldest items

in Mr. Parnell's rather freezing personality; both in private and in public his utterance is slow, detached, deliberate; his voice, of fine quality, is even never raised, never strident, never emotional. Unlike the mass of his countrymen, Mr. Parnell (though capable of dry humour) is never witty, never tender, never impassioned, never pathetic, never excited, never ridiculous. Mr. Dillon can say the simplest things in a tone that makes the tears start in ten thousand eyes; he has a voice, a way, a power of sympathy and of conviction that raise a speech, ordinary in thought and language, to the height of oratory; as a speaker he is a great artist, and wins his audience through the heart and the emotions, whereas Mr. Parnell adopts the scientific method. It may be doubted whether Mr. Dillon's speech is ever quite the speech he intended, or whether his audience disperses with an exact verbal memory of half a dozen sentences, while it is certain that no one of them re-reads the speech without a feeling of stupendous disappointment; the printed speech is no more like the speech delivered than a photograph is like a beautiful landscape. But in one great essential Mr. Parnell's speaking is far before Mr. Dillon's: he always says what he means to say, and that often in a neat, terse, epigrammatic form; his dryly-delivered speeches go to the root of the matter, and his cold sentences, dropped out with irritating calm of manner, are pure metal. He knows what he means to say, and he says it. What is even rarer, he knows what he means not to say, and he does not say it: he is always master of himself, and his important speeches are as carefully thought out as the moves of a game of chess. Except for the calm and simple dignity of his person and address, Mr. Parnell is not an impressive speaker; he speaks well, clearly, to the point, without hesitation, but he is too reserved, too unemotional, and too exact for an orator; his audience is never in his confidence or his full sympathy. His speeches read better than they sound, for in public the Irish leader has the reluctant manner of a retiring man. Indeed, to this day he hates public speeches, and monster meetings, and demonstrations, and shrinks from them with the sensitiveness of a nervous woman. As often happens, coldness is the armour of sensitiveness, and with Mr. Parnell increased calm, pallor, and a strained quietness of tone are the betrayals of passion

or scorn, or suffering. No public man has such iron self-control, and indeed, though of a nervous constitution, there is a great deal of hardness in Mr. Parnell's nature; even among his friends he neither claims nor gives much sympathy, and makes no confidences, though willing to receive all that are offered him. For a silent man he is remarkably tolerant of garrulity: at the meetings of the party everyone is free to air his own views, make his suggestions, expound his theory. Mr. Parnell listens quietly and courteously, with an encouraging, even genial air to all, but in the end it is his will that is supreme. When everyone has had his say, Mr. Parnell, in a few words, puts forth his plans, or retires for deliberation, and when his decision is taken, nothing external can change it: neither reasoning, argument, persuasion, nor affection. He never gives and probably never knows the mental history of his deliberations. It is a joke among his friends that Mr. Parnell is unaware of the existence of Mr. Parnell.

Everyone wonders how a man of Mr. Parnell's circumstance and temper came to devote himself to the Irish cause, the more so that the land question was not included in his original programme; liberty, nationality, the freedom of the Irish race were the first ambitions of this young Anglo-Irish-American. With a caution rare in an inexperienced man, he deliberated long before pledging himself to the land question, and, with a modesty and willingness to take advice, that still form a leading trait in his character, he took counsel of a man who knew the heart of the people. "Do you think, Mr. Kickham," he asked, "that the people are prepared to go far for the land question?" "I am afraid," was the reply, "that they would go to the gate of hell for it," and there can be no doubt that the land agitation has been the body and strength of the present national movement. Liberty, nationality: these are beautiful and inspiring ideas, but every man has a body, and is by no means so sure about the soul.

It may be that Mr. Parnell is ambitious, but, if so, he is an exceedingly far-sighted man, for when he entered on the obstructive policy, as the solitary aide-de-camp of Mr. Biggar, he lost more than he could possibly hope to gain. Even, or perhaps especially, to those who know him best, the character of Mr. Parnell is a riddle,

though many of its apparent inconsistencies are explained by its absence of introspectiveness and of the impulse that prompts most of us to wish to be understood by our friends. Mr. Parnell is a student of the cause, not of himself; he has no care to appear consistent; in matters unconnected with policy he leaves himself free. He hates to be bothered about trivial things, and he hates answering letters, and he has the reputation (well or ill-deserved) of possessing a frugal mind. Certainly no man cares less for luxury, or show, or even comfort; he will travel from London to Cork without food, and suggest, by way of supper, a cigar at the other end. All readers of *Punch* know his indifference to dress, and that is but a type of a certain ascetic strain in his character: he cares neither for meat nor drink, and is content with half a room in a country inn. Among his detractors he is supposed to be parsimonious and fond of money; it is said that when stamped envelopes are enclosed with a request (always ignored) for his autograph, he transfers the stamps to unwritten envelopes. Be this as it may, economy is not with him a sign of meanness. He will give largely, generously, and spontaneously where he believes a good work will be helped by a large subscription.

Among his colleagues, with a few exceptions, Mr. Parnell inspires the warmest admiration and devotion. Only those who have worked with him can appreciate his mental gifts, as well as his justice, courteousness, simplicity, patience, and unselfishness —unselfishness, however, that is never sweetened by consideration for others. In minor matters he is indulgent, easy-going, amiable, and just; he fascinates by the strength of his mind and character, but he is admirable rather than lovable, and is a man born to lead and command, to do things that are difficult and great rather than those that are compassionate and good. Probably no living man could lead the Irish party as he leads it, and steer it as he does through the Scylla and Charybdis of Liberalism and the various parties pledged to physical force. Among his eighty-five Mr. Parnell counts ex-Fenians and men who fought under the pacific banner of Mr. Butt; he has addressed American extremists and English Nonconformist gatherings, has made compacts with Mr. Gladstone and Lord Carnarvon, and, though the eyes of a host

of detractors of every political creed are upon him, he has never had to eat his words. If he makes a mistake he admits it, and can afford to do so because his political mistakes are very rare.

Mr. Parnell is never off his guard, never indiscreet or confidential; he never tells on Monday what he does not wish known till Tuesday night; he knows that where there is trust there is always the possibility of betrayal. In short, Mr. Parnell is pre-eminently the right man for his post. Every gift, natural and acquired, and every limitation of his nature makes him more fitted for the place he fills. Aloof from the hesitations, the doubts, the waverings of ordinary mortals, he pursues his way through failure and success, neither daunted by the one nor elated by the other. No doubt he is not invulnerable: he feels, and feels keenly, the heart sickness and despondency, the anxiety and care, the responsibility and odium of his public life. No doubt in the beginning he believed the struggle would be less prolonged, less merciless than fifteen years have proved it, but what of that? the cause is the same, and the end worth the pain. Whatever that may have been, and there have been times of cruel trial, Mr. Parnell has always borne it with unflinching, modest, undefiant courage. If a little cold, he is never hard nor bitter, but always serene, and courteous, and kind, and in sudden and surprising changes he has always shown to the public and his friends the same calm face, neither elated nor dismayed.

FOLIOS AND FOOTLIGHTS.

SINCE you went to live in that far-away suburb, scarcely accessible even by the influenza, your letters, my poor friend, have been dashed with a certain belated melancholy. Why on earth do you excite yourself over forgotten cases of literary plagiarism? Don't you know that Pelion has lately been piled upon Ossa in that line of business? It has even become a religious mania. Ancient Pistol has turned his conveyances into a book of devotions. You remember Miss J., and how she wanted to marry Wellington for the good of his soul?* The cloven hoof of the spinster's worldly ambition was not very skilfully hidden by the petticoat of piety. I fancy I see that ineffectual garment in a very different enterprise. Strange as it may seem, Miss J. is still amongst us, and she is carrying on an inspired Scripture of her own, in which you may discover "the will of God" and your "duty towards man."

You cannot expect me to satisfy your insatiable curiosity about everything. For instance, I cannot tell you whether the enthusiast who always goes down on one knee to put coals on the fire, because he once saw Robert Browning in that position, has made this observance one of the rites of the Browning Society. Nor can I enlighten you as to Tennyson's opinion of the great contemporary who has gone before him to join the mighty spirits in the Elysian Fields. What great writers really think of one another we seldom know, and it is scarcely fair to ask. Now and then there is a luminous piece of candour. In one of his letters to Mrs. Brookfield, Thackeray launches into this chastened rhapsody: "Have you read Dickens? O! it is charming! brave Dickens! It

---

* *Letters of the Duke of Wellington to Miss J.* T. F. Unwin.

has some of his very prettiest touches—those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the A.'s works, has been copying the O.A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer, and *David Copperfield* will be improved by taking a lesson from *Vanity Fair*." To me that is one of the most interesting pieces of criticism in literary history. Well, years hence, perhaps, some obliging lady—these precious confidences are generally addressed to ladies—may favour the world with a letter of Browning's extolling his great peer: "Have you read Alfred? Noble, glorious Alfred! But don't you think he has been digging in *Sordello?*" Or Tennyson may be found to have dropped this private hint: "Just cast your eye on Robert. He's immense. And I am not displeased to note that his studies of Another Bard have helped him to turn his lines a little more deftly than of yore." At any rate, I like to think of our immortals secretly studying each other's art and something more. I don't believe Browning would have subscribed to the philosophy which seems to make old age the only guarantee of true spiritual exaltation in Tennyson's "Evolutionist," but I fancy there is a Browning touch in the splendid line,

"Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven which hangs on a star."

You wonder next what Mr. Rider Haggard thinks of the literary sally of his brother Andrew.* Isn't it Sir Andrew Aguecheek who, in the midst of Sir Toby's amorous bombast, pathetically observes, "I was adored once"? Well, when he hears his brother's works praised, Captain Andrew Haggard may murmur, "I wrote a novel, too." It is the most artlessly fraternal tribute that ever was penned. The Captain gives you a map to illustrate the manœuvres of his best fighter, who paints himself black for this performance, and leads a band of coloured gentlemen to discomfit the Abyssinians. Fair ladies "disintegrate" themselves, and vanish from Cairo to turn up in London. A beauteous Circassian, of unchastened emotions,

* *Dodo and I.* By Captain Andrew Haggard. W. Blackwood and Sons.

causes a remarkable diversion in the Divorce Court by sticking one of the heroes with a stiletto, which is then promptly plunged into her fair bosom by a Gnostic seer. Mr. Justice Butt observes that the proceedings are irregular, but cannot quite make up his mind that they are criminal. Meanwhile, the seer calmly prepares to "disintegrate," and when the point of law is decided in favour of handcuffs he disappears from jurisdiction. But the oddest thing to me is that simultaneously with this notable imitation, or exaggeration, of Rider Haggard comes a faithful satellite of Robert Louis Stevenson.* When you find a strange man in an Inverness cape, wandering fitfully along the Strand, carefully avoiding all contact with the old and feeble, but thrusting himself eagerly amongst the young and sturdy; and when it appears that this mysterious person, worn and ancient as he is, bears a striking resemblance to the model of youth and manly vigour, the Admirable Crichton of his club, the idol of all who know him, you begin to suspect the trail of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* There never was an inspiration more direct and manifest. But it is a genuine inspiration, and Mr. Stevenson has no reason to be ashamed of his disciple in a hazardous experiment.

Do you remember an old American story of the rival orators who made the Union expand till at last it was bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the south by the precession of the Equinoxes, on the east by the Garden of Eden, and on the west by the Day of Judgment? I am reminded of that anecdote by Mark Twain's last joke.† At first, it was a joke of tolerably modest dimensions. It filled a few pages of a magazine, and here and there were breaks in which the author gave a synopsis of several chapters. Upon my word, I took this in good faith as part of the jest, and laughed over the incidental fun in brackets. Figure my amazement when the joke swelled till it reached the proportions of an historical work in several hundred pages. This was sufficiently staggering, but then came Mr. W. D. Howells,

* *Master of His Fate.* By J. M. Cobban. W. Blackwood and Sons.

† *A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur.* By Mark Twain. Chatto and Windus.

with the Garden of Eden, and the Day of Judgment.* He hailed this book of Mark Twain's as a witness of the great truth that American humour is the servant of humanity. Here is a huge Colossus of a joke, bestriding the centuries, and we are to crawl respectfully between its legs and acknowledge its monumental services to the human race. Nay, lest you should suppose that this tremendous fooling is meant to disparage one of the noblest figures in the legends of chivalry, Mr. Howells assures you that the dignity of King Arthur is as impressive in this work as it is in Tennyson's *Idyils*. Well, I think this scarcely fathoms Mark Twain's Yankee. Did you notice the other day that this humorist gravely deplored the effect of European literature on the American mind? His countrymen are much too fond of reading about kings and queens and aristocrats. They cannot shake themselves free from the literary traditions of a bad old hemisphere from which they have nothing to learn. Is it possible, then, that Mark Twain's book is the first of a patriotic series, designed to emancipate Americans from their bondage? Will the Connecticut Yankee take up his residence next at the Court of Kaiser William? Will Congress pass an Act to protect Republican principles from the insidious influence of books like *Little Lord Fauntleroy?* If so, Mrs. Hodgson Burnett may have to answer for the heinous offence of satirising the institutions she ought to hold dear; for not only does she write pernicious stories about British noblemen, but she has actually introduced American children to a fairy prince who is turned out of his father's dominions because his feet are so small, and who finds a magic pool in which the offending members become large enough to suit the most patriotic prejudice.†

But something has gone wrong with one of our own humorists. Can you fancy the Walrus and the Carpenter discussing the morality of play-going, and deciding that the fear of sudden death in a theatre ought to convince the timid that it is wrong for them to

* *Harper's Magazine*. January.

† *Little Saint Elizabeth, and Other Stories*. By Frances Hodgson Burnett. F. Warne and Co.

go there? Surely, Mr. Carroll, that is the last idea in the world to put into the head of a child, especially at pantomime time; but perhaps nobody expects children to read the preface of *Sylvie and Bruno*.* This mention of the theatre recalls that afternoon when you and I hung out of a box at the Novelty, breathlessly absorbed in the strange proceedings of Nora Helmer. I have never been able to make up my mind about Nora, but her husband is probably the most perfect portrait of the average, well-meaning, male domestic egotist in literature. There was not a man in the theatre who did not see some reflection of himself in that mirror. But what think you of Ellida and her singular Mariner?† She is "psychically abnormal," of course. That is the phrase with which Mr. Gosse, in his introduction, neatly circumvents a host of difficulties. A neurotic girl from a lighthouse, with the sea running in her head and morphia in her veins, and with the fixed idea that she belongs to a murderous navigator who has disappeared, scarcely offers a rational motive for social experiment. Then her mariner is a Strange Man, who ought to be a Vanderdecken at least; but what can you make of a Vanderdecken with a carpet bag, who tells a married woman in the most matter-of-fact way to pack her wardrobe, and, when she declines to go, departs with the easy contentment of a sailor who has a wife in every port? There is a lurking smile in Mr. Gosse's adroit periods, as he glides off the Ibsen theory that because a half-crazy girl is allowed to choose between her husband and a nonchalant cut-throat from nowhere, this recognition of her rightful independence must restore her to sanity.

But, dear me, what a comfort it is to believe that anything is a masterpiece! What would you give for the faith and the vocabulary which make Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman* an "imperial farce," superior to *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*?‡ Can no one persuade Mr. Swinburne to take some living dramatist under his purple wing, and overawe the pea-shooter of the author of *Mike Fletcher?* Then, perhaps, you would leave off pestering me

* *Sylvie and Bruno.* By Lewis Carroll. Macmillan and Co.

† *The Lady from the Sea.* By Henrik Ibsen. Translated by E. M. Aveling. With Critical Introduction by Edmund Gosse. T. F. Unwin.

‡ *A Study of Ben Jonson.* By A. C. Swinburne. Chatto and Windus.

by asking how long the new and original English drama is to be buried in the dungeons of the Bastille, and when Robert Landry is to be followed to the scaffold by Robert Emmett. But who is going to write the representative comedy of Victorian manners? That is what most of us are looking for. Oddly enough, the one man who is generally regarded as capable of this considerable feat has dismissed it as impossible. If I remember rightly, Mr. Pinero has laid it down as an axiom that the comedy of manners is obsolete, and cannot be revived. It has been succeeded by the play which is "comedy in essence, and farce in execution." That opinion might be natural enough in the author of *The Magistrate* and *The Schoolmistress*, if he had never struck a much higher vein. You need not flatter yourself that I am going to argue *The Profligate* over again with you, for I remember only too well your offer, after a heated discussion, to rewrite that drama on rational principles. You are not the only man who was quite ready to teach Pinero the logical course for a profligate. But I mention his play simply because it contains some elements which disprove his assertion that a typical comedy of this generation is beyond the playwright's scope. Such characters as Lord Dangars, Mrs. Stonehay and her daughter, are pretty life-like material, and if Mr. Pinero's insight, which is keen enough, can give us a portrait or two as faithful as Ibsen's Torwald, he will have little need to make his comedy depend on "farce in execution."

Meanwhile, we amuse ourselves with *The Gondoliers*, and harrow our nerves with *La Tosca* and *The Dead Heart*. I confess to you that Mrs. Bernard Beere and Mr. Forbes Robertson made me quite ill between them. This actor has never done any piece of work so strong and finished as his Scarpia, repulsive as it is; and though Mrs. Bernard Beere cannot coo like the caressing Sarah in the cathedral, she plays with a power and intelligence which do credit to the English stage. This much has been gained by Mr. Hare's enterprise, but *La Tosca* is a gruesome dish that would raise the gorge of the witches in *Macbeth*. The Lyceum guillotine is a cheery emblem after Tosca's table-knife and her Roman candles. I admit that to pile horror on horror's head without making the edifice grotesque is no small achievement, but the conspicuous

talent expended on it might be more happily employed. I was haunted by Scarpia till I saw *The Gondoliers*. He left me at the door of the Savoy with the malignant remark that he would like to reduce Rutland Barrington's weight in the castle of St. Angelo. You have read, no doubt, that the new opera shows Mr. Gilbert's lack of invention. "Bless us," say some oracles, "it is only a 'Bab' Ballad over again." Do they ever appreciate their debt to a man who writes a comic opera which is really comic? When I think of the dreary dialogue and the vulgar antics which do duty in so much of what is called comic opera, I hail Mr. Gilbert as one of our greatest benefactors. His endowment is a whimsical fancy, which is always presenting some social foible in a new and diverting light. He can laugh at the peerage without offending the most susceptible aristocrat (except possibly in New York), and he can make fun of a democratic ideal in Barataria without provoking the ire of Mr. Bernard Shaw. To me *The Gondoliers* is a thing of joy. The music is positively enchanting. The nightmares of Sardou have left me, and when I dream, it is of Jessie Bond. I hum the Grand Inquisitor's philosophy,

> "When every one is somebodee
> Then no one's anybody,"

and think it is quite as instructive as all the Huxley lectures on "the natural inequality of men." I have a frightful temptation to break into the *cachuca* in the drawing-room, and when I inadvertently started the first step the other day, I entirely failed to persuade the company that it was a quotation.

Well, all this may grieve the soul of the author of *The Middleman*, who thinks we are too much the slaves of bright faces, pretty dresses, and "catchy songs." Mr. Jones ought to be pleased that anyone can sing and dance in this gloomy island. We cannot always be sympathising with Mr. Willard, admirable as he is, when he gloats over his china, and turns the tables on Mr. Mackintosh. Mr. Gilbert has his protests as well as Mr. Jones. He says it is "horribly inartistic" for actresses to play male parts. But that does not prevent me from admiring Miss Agnes Huntington's manly graces in *Marjorie*. And who ever saw anything inartistic